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FATHER WILLIAM DOYLE S.J.

A SPIRITUAL STUDY

BY

PROFESSOR
ALFRED O'RAHILLY

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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INTRODUCTION

THIS book is not a mere biography. It is a deliberate attempt to give an exposition of Catholic spirituality, particularly from the Jesuit standpoint, by weaving a commentary round a life, which is at once ordinary yet heroic, full of pathos as well as humour, which begins with faithful adherence to the commonplace and ends in tragic romance. The classical and excellent treatise of Rodriguez, which has nourished many generations of ascetics, has not the appeal it had three hundred years ago. We are not so interested in the holy Abbot Pambo, nor are we so much moved when "the preceding doctrine is confirmed by some examples." We need, to supplement—not to supersede—such solid fare, more liquid and digestible spiritual food. The life of a man like Father Doyle makes spirituality at once living and concrete. We can read his intimate thoughts and struggles, we can follow his spiritual progress, knowing that we are not simply studying a formal treatise but rather looking into the sanctuary of a soul. And as we read, we can follow the story of one who lived beside us, we can smile once more at his pranks and witticisms, we can note in him, as in ourselves, failures and faults as well as achievements, and finally we can test the old-fashioned spirituality not only in cell and class-room, but also in camp and battlefield.

With this object in view, I decided not to act as a mere transcriber or editor. Without in any way obtruding my own views, which in such matters are of no account, I have attempted to give a study as well as a record. I have sought not only to chronicle the thoughts and experiences of Fr. Doyle, but also in some measure to give them their true perspective by inserting them in the rich and inclusive tradition of Catholic spirituality. For this purpose I have drawn,

more extensively than is usual in a mere biography, on other spiritual writers, especially on those who were Fr. Doyle's favourite authors.[1] I have tried in particular, to lay stress on the spiritual ideas of S. Ignatius, as revealed in his Letters, Constitutions and Spiritual Exercises, and to distinguish carefully between these general ideals and their individual adaptations or special developments. On this point I may have been excessively careful and irritatingly insistent. But my intention, however defective its execution, has been to make this book not merely a sketch of the life of Fr. Doyle, but also, as I am convinced he himself would have wished, the prolongation of his life-work.

The latter portion of this memoir recounts Fr. Doyle's experiences as Military Chaplain. It has been compiled almost entirely from the letters or budgets which he used to send home to be perused by his relatives and intimate friends, without the slightest ulterior thought of publication. In including these interesting letters from the Front, it has not been my intenion, any more than it was the writer's, to make another addition to "war literature." This book claims to be simply the record of an apostolic life and the study of a very remarkable spiritual personality. His experiences at the Front are of biographical and spiritual interest and help to correct what might otherwise be a partial or misleading impression.

In obedience to the decree of Pope Urban VIII I protest

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[1] The accumulation of quotations in chapters 6, 7 and 8, not only from standard Jesuit writers but from those of other schools of spirituality, has been quite deliberate. Any attempt to give my own unsupported views would have been fruitless. It is hoped that my sketch of the dogmatic background of Catholic asceticism and mysticism and of the ideal of reparation will increase the value of this book as "a spiritual study," without detracting from its biographical interest. One of Fr. Doyle's favourite books, the life of Soeur Gertrude-Marie (Legueu, *Une mystique de nos jours,* Angers 1910) was on 17th March, 1922, declared to be reprehensible (*esse reprobandum*).—*Acta Apost. Sedis,* 1922, p. 193. This is not exactly a condemnation, but rather a warning against some errors and inaccuracies. My German translator, Father von Festenberg-Packisch S. J. (*Verborgenes Heldentum,* 1923, p. 133) suggests two reasons: (1) the danger of self-deception in ascribing every thought and impulse immediately to God, (2) the danger of excess in familiarity with God and Christ. These are two errors against which warnings are given in this as in previous editions of the present biography.

that all that is written in this life of Fr. Doyle has no other force or credit than such as is grounded on human authority. Hence no expression or statement is intended to assume the approbation or anticipate the decision of the Church.

The large circulation already reached by a work, which made no attempt whatever to conceal hard sayings and uncompromising actions, proves—even apart from evidence of the numerous conversions and vocations which it has helped [2] —that its publication has been amply justified and shows that the few unfavourable criticisms of reviewers were unfounded. A brief consideration of these criticisms may, however, serve to remove some misconceptions.

It has been suggested that Fr. Doyle's type of holiness is not in accordance with Jesuit ideals. In the present edition this objection has been fully answered by incorporating a very full treatment of Jesuit spirituality, based on a first-hand study of the writings of S. Ignatius, his first companions, and the saints and authors of the Society. An even more convincing refutation will be found in the following letter addressed to me on 29th May, 1923, by Very Rev. W. Ledochowsky, General of the Society of Jesus:

"You have done an apostolic work in producing this Life, of which the spirituality based on the Exercises of S. Ignatius will be most helpful to souls. I congratulate you on the success which the biography has already attained; and I hope that Fr. Doyle's example and words more widely known may continue to contribute to the greater glory of God. The Divine Master will reward the many labours you have devoted to this edifying publication." [3]

It has also been objected that this work may offend the

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[2] Without referring to the many communications I have personally received I may cite this from the *Month* (Nov. 1920): "As we predicted, it has effectively perpetuated its subject's zealous work for souls, for from all quarters come testimonies of the wonderful good it has done in reviving and stimulating the love and practice of perfection in those who have become acquainted with it."

[3] See also *Acta Romana Societatis Iesu,* 1920, p. 243. The General warmly approved of the Italian translation and had it read in the refectory of the Curia.

susceptibilities of Protestants.[4] The assumption apparently is that a Catholic Irishman may not write the life of an Irish Catholic priest lest it fall into the hands of an English Protestant! In any case, it is a curious fact that Protestants have displayed a more enthusiastic admiration for Fr. Doyle than even his fellow-Catholics. It was a non-Catholic writer who wrote as follows: "I am about to bring to your notice the life of a saint of our own day. . . . The first period, with its record of an intimate spiritual life, far beyond the comprehension of most of us, may well astonish those Protestant readers who have little or no understanding of the Catholic inner life. . . . You who understand and wonder and you who turn away with repulsion and disgust follow William Doyle with me to the battle-fields. . . . Well, there you have a modern Jesuit! One almost smiles when one thinks of what the word means to so many ignorant and prejudiced people. A follower of Jesus indeed! May he rest in peace and may eternal light shine upon him." [5]

It was in an address to the Anglican Church Congress in October, 1921, that the following words were spoken: [6] "I came across the biography of an obscure Jesuit, Fr. William Doyle. . . . The flame of his personal allegiance to his Saviour burned very brightly but it showed itself mainly in the acts of the interior life—in long hours of prayer, in rigid self-discipline, in tremendous penances. . . . It is not a popular ideal to-day. Other-worldliness is often spoken of with contempt; and the best Christian is supposed to be the man with the largest number of good works to his credit. This seems to me to spring from a wrong standard of values; and I desire to lift up an unimportant voice on behalf of the other-worldly ideal. . . . What we want in the Church of England is more men and women of this type, more men and women who show their allegiance in this way. Nothing else will convert the world back again to Jesus Christ."

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[4] "No sane person would put this book into the hands of a non-Catholic."—*Universe*, 16th April, 1920.

[5] Guy Thorne, *Dorset Daily Press*, 17th August, 1921. See also the quotations on pp. 137, 330.

[6] Rev. G. C. Rawlinson, *Church Times*, 21st October, 1921.

It was in the Unitarian Chapel of St. Helen's that the following sermon was preached in November, 1922: [7]

"It is necessary to get into a sympathetic atmosphere in order to appreciate the life of the great Roman Catholic Saint, Fr. William Doyle. Many are apt to regard the Roman Catholic Religion as a mass of cobwebs. But will such a great saint live in a house of webs? In looking at his photograph I see the face of a man with a broad, high forehead, the sweetest, kindest smile, a face without guile, the soul of sincerity and kindness. He was born to puzzle the world, and we must place him in a niche among great men.

"Even in his early boyhood there were signs of sainthood. He was a happy, healthy boy, but even then disciplining himself to be a saint. All men, at some time in their lives, have a call to aspire to higher things. Many let the call go by, but to the true saint the call is ever being repeated.

"The chief point that the life of Fr. Doyle brings before us is that saints still live in the twentieth century. He was a true man of God, yet he was always jolly. He played cricket as other men do, yet he has a place among the saints of God. On one occasion he had been to a retreat, nourishing his soul by quiet communication with God, when on his way back he saw a bed of nettles. At once his face lit up, and, undressing, he rolled in the nettles until his body seemed on fire. Then he went home. The doctor was called. He said it was an accident. The next morning, though still very ill, he went to Mass, and on receiving the Body and Blood of Christ the fever left him. On another occasion, he stood up to his neck in a dirty pond praying for sinners. So on, all through his life, he was constantly chastising that splendid body of his for the love of Jesus. On looking at his photograph we can hardly realise that such a fine intellectual man did such mad things. But then one realises that all the spiritual heroes of old did such things; their souls so full of longing to reach their goal.

"He then became a Jesuit. His first desire was to be a

[7] Cited in the *Dowanhill Training College Magazine*, January 1923, p. 47. There are, of course, some obvious inaccuracies in this panegyric.

missionary, but he had learnt to obey, so he put his desire aside, and became a Chaplain at the Front during the War. Here he proved absolutely fearless, and lived entirely for the Irishmen who were in his charge. He did not go through a course of training as others did. It was not necessary, for all his life he had been training. Small wonder that when such a man was in the trenches he was able to bear all hardships and never grew weary.

"How can we best fit him into our lives? By daily letting the spirit triumph over the flesh, instead of helping the flesh to trample on the spirit; by entering into the spirit of his life. And thus he will help us better to understand Roman Catholicism."

It was the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference who on 25th July, 1923, made the following reference to Fr. Doyle in an address to his co-religionists: [8] "I have been profoundly stirred in recent months by the experience of a young Roman Catholic saint, a member of the Society of Jesus, a tremendous lover of Jesus, a tremendous soul-winner, a great human and a great humorist. I say that because I want in the next few moments, if you will allow me, to take you right into the depths of his soul."

It is not often surely that "the biography of an obscure Jesuit" has been unreservedly eulogised in the pulpits of Anglicans, Wesleyans and Unitarians. When Protestants thus welcome the story of a heroic life, told with outspoken sincerity, Catholics need not be too squeamish in revealing to their separated brethren the motives and practices of Catholic spirituality.[9] The world will not be won by half-hearted apology and shame-faced concealment. It is not by such compromise that men will be brought to Christ. The truth alone will set men free. Let us not be ashamed of the

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[8] Rev. T. Ferrier Hulme, *Methodist Recorder*, 2nd August, 1923.

[9] "We may be grateful to his biographer for having had the courage to call these things plainly by their names, instead of joining that cautious conspiracy of silence concerning them, which has led many to imagine that they went out of use with the Middle Ages."—H. Lucas S.J., *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (London), May 1922, p. 134.

gospel; let us openly utter those hard sayings which are to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Gentiles foolishness.

There seems, then, to be no case for mutilating the present biography or suppressing what, if it occurred in the life of a canonised saint, would be expected as natural.[10] To remove the last vestiges of any ground for such a contention, a complete statement of the Catholic view of asceticism, prayer and reparation, has been included. It was considered preferable to risk spoiling the continuity and homogeneity of the book rather than incur the charge of narrating facts without adequate explanation.

The ethics of such suppression is, in any case, rather doubtful. Cardinal Newman speaks somewhere[11] of "the endemic perennial fidget which possesses us about giving scandal: facts are omitted in great histories or glosses are put upon memorable acts because they are thought not edifying; whereas of all scandals such omissions, such glosses, are the greatest." Biographers who wish to be honest have had before now to face the scruples of those weak apologists who wish to make Catholicism fashionable by hiding Calvary behind Cana. "What, it may well be asked," says Fr. D. Devas O.F.M. in his life of St. Leonard of Port-Maurice,[12] "What is the use of putting before us to-day the example of one who, though modern in the ranks of the saints, was most certainly what is called—contemptuously, I fear—a medievalist, a man who followed old-time ways and customs and sought to perpetuate them?" "Far better, so it seems to

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[10] "We think certain passages might with advantage have been omitted, nor do we feel that the fact that such things occur in the lives of the saints entirely justifies their inclusion."—*Catholic Book Notes,* June 1920, p. 91. Nobody, of course, denies the necessity of certain reticences. The justification of publishing the private journals of, say, Samuel Johnson or Daniel O'Connell is not generally disputed. The propriety of publishing Boswell's letters to Temple (in Prof. Tinker's *Letters of James Boswell,* 1924) is much more doubtful, for they reveal the writer's private immoralities and their publication merely panders to prurient curiosity. Fr. Doyle's notes are a permanent contribution to religious literature, no more to be destroyed than Vergil's Æneid which its author also wished to be burnt.

[11] St. Chrysostom, ch. 1—*Historical Sketches* ii. 231.

[12] *Life,* 1920, introd. p. ix.

me," he answers, "to relegate his memory to complete oblivion, rather than to resuscitate him only in part. We have no right to mutilate our subject and then present a partial figure, on the plea that such is the only aspect of his life of any interest to-day. To put the question on no higher level, such a proceeding would be a falsification of history; to me it seems the falsification of a saint."

Similarly there was an outcry when the great preacher of Notre Dame was revealed to the world as one addicted to the medieval habit of scourging himself and insisting on a strict observance of rule. "We have long asked ourselves," writes his friend and biographer,[13] "how we should make known all that we know on this subject. Should we let the truth be rather guessed than plainly told in detail? Should we veil our narrative under a transparent cloud of terms and images in order not to shock timid and fastidious minds? Or ought we not rather simply and frankly to tell the truth at all risks? This last course appeared to us preferable; it seemed worthier of the man whose victories we are relating and of the holy actions with which his life is filled. Why should not we have the courage to tell and the public to hear of those things which he had the courage to do? . . . I well know how jealous he was in keeping a veil over these secret practices; and I ask myself if his severe eye from the height of heaven will not blame me for what I have dared to do. . . . And yet how can one speak of this life without saying what was the soul of it? without revealing what was the hidden and powerful spring which gave motion to all its virtues, to its tenderness, its eloquence and its piety?"

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[13] D. Chocarne, O.P., *The Inner Life of the V. Rev. Père Lacordaire,* (Eng.) trans. Dublin [1867], pp. 331, 344. The reviewer in the *Universe* (16th April 1920) irrelevantly cites against me what Fr. Gerard Hopkins, S.J., said to Coventry Patmore about the latter's immolated book: "That's tellings." Patmore's *Sponsa Dei* "was not more nor less than an interpretation of the love between the soul and God by an analogy of the love between a woman and a man." Fr. Hopkins "placed before Patmore the dilemma of having either to burn the book or to show it to his director—and the latter alternative was offensive to the poet's pride." E. Gosse, *Coventry Patmore,* 1905, pp. 169 f.

Surely, unless the inner life of Catholicism be something of which we must be ashamed, it is not only allowable but desirable to hold up for our help and inspiration the struggles and strivings, the graces and achievements of one who once lived beside us but is now beyond the bourne of temptation and pride, that so we may say as the Church says of others, *Ecce sacerdos magnus qui in diebus suis placuit Deo.* Without indicating the sources and methods of his spirituality, what would there be to chronicle in the life of Fr. Doyle? Unless perchance, as has been actually suggested, we were to reduce him to the level of a war-journalist! The reception already accorded to his biography is ample vindication of the decision to reveal the story of his soul. The result is not only "an invaluable document for the study of the psychology of the saints," [14] but also a very practical and detailed exposition of the spiritual life.[15]

But how, it may be asked, can the publication of singularities, however heroic, help ordinary readers? To which it may be briefly replied that a life without some such distinguishing characteristics, without something of the abnormal or supernormal in it, could hardly be written at all. Even in the case of our Lord the evangelist sums up His hidden life in the words: "He was subject to them." And if we wanted to write the life of an obedient religious, we should perforce be equally laconic, unless, of course, we could give instances of abnormal punctiliousness such as S. John Berchmans practised, or recount the miraculous flowering of an obediently watered stick. No one expects to read the life of a man who ate and slept and talked just as a few million others do. What we look for in the life of a saint or religious is to find that

[14] H. Kelly S.J., *Fr. W. Doyle S.J.*, Dublin 1922. p. 4. "The life of Fr. Doyle . . . seems destined to take rank among modern classics of the religious life."—Evelyn Underhill (Mrs. Stuart Moore), *Daily News*, 13th Feb., 1923.

[15] Cf. Fr. Baker's preface of the *Inner Life of Dame G. More* (ed. Dom. B. Weld-Blundell, 1911, p. xxxviii): "I have been so full in expressing the particulars of our virgin's life because I have heard divers well-minded souls, apt for an internal life, bemoan that they could get little benefit by books which daily come forth of the lives and examples of holy persons, because these books do rarely specify the nature of their spiritual exercises in their internal carriage."

he did what we do but much better and much more.[16] Such a man always excites prejudices in certain minds; he is inexplicable and the inexplicable is always irritating; he disturbs our complacency and upsets our conclusions. And it is usually moderate religious people who most resent the intrusion of an extremist; the good is the greatest enemy of the better. But, as is shown in the following pages, the extremist or specialist has an important spiritual function in the world. He is not to be regarded simply as a depersonalised and generalised model for our mechanical imitation. He has a strongly developed character of his own, he is in his way unique. But he stands for certain eternal verities, he symbolises and incarnates man's perennial aspiration towards God.

Even granting the justice of the foregoing considerations, a reader may still share the objection made by a few Catholic reviewers[17] to the utilisation of private diaries which Fr. Doyle probably wished to be burnt. The following letter written by his brother, Rev. Charles Doyle, S.J., will explain the situation: "When I went up to Dublin, some days after Willie's death was announced, the Provincial asked me to go to Rathfarnham, go through Willie's papers, etc., and take what I wished. On a shelf in his press I found several piles of letters and some notebooks. On top of the lot was a piece of paper on which was written: 'To be burnt should anything happen to me.' Before coming to Rathfarnham two of Willie's penitents had written to me to say that they thought he had kept conscience-letters of theirs and asking, one that the letters should be burnt, the other that they should be returned. I found these two bundles of letters and I carried

[16] "The man would hardly be regarded as a great saint whose character seemed completely reasonable to the mass of mankind."—F. W. H. Myers, *Human Personality*, 1904, i. 56.

[17] "Such a breach of confidence is difficult to justify."—*Downside Review*, January 1921, p. 67. According to a Jesuit paper the *Bombay Examiner* (25th August 1923) private matters were "stolen from manuscripts" of Fr. Doyle by his "admiring friends" (*i.e.* Superiors) who thus showed themselves lacking in "good taste" and "unscrupulous in the cause of what they believed to be edifying"—or is it disedifying? Contrast non-Catholic reviews: "While we may wonder at the reasoning, we can still welcome its conclusion."—*Times Literary Supplement*, 8th April, 1920. "Its publication is justified."—*Church Times*, 8th Oct., 1920, p. 340.

out the requests of the writers. Together with this correspondence were Willie's diaries and, I think, some other manuscripts—though I am not quite sure about these last. While I was glancing through the diaries, the Superior of Rathfarnham came into the room. I told him what I had found and asked his advice as to the burning of what might prove later on to be a great help to souls. He agreed with me that Willie's wishes should be disregarded and the diaries preserved. So much for the diaries. But it is certain that many things as intimate (if not more so) as what is found in these booklets were left without any directions as to their fate, *e. g.* letters, note-books at the Front."

The injunction of Fr. Doyle does not really affect the issue one way or the other. Even if he had expressed no wish, his journals, written solely for God and himself, must, by their very nature, be regarded as tacitly, if not expressly, intended to be kept sacred and private. Furthermore, in the case of a Jesuit, any such wish must be considered as subject to the decision of his Superior. S. John Berchmans wrote on the first page of his spiritual note-book: "This must not be opened by anyone but the Superior." [18] The same formula must be taken as inscribed on the diaries of Fr. Doyle, whose rule [19] directed that "it ought to be most agreeable to him that his whole soul should be manifest" to his Superior—"not only his defects, but also his penances or mortifications and all his devotions and virtues."

The only question at issue, then, is the quotation of documents which were meant to be private. It is surely rather late in the day to regard such publication as in any way objectionable. A good deal of our history, and practically all our biography, sacred and profane, would have to be eliminated! No innovation whatever was introduced by the use of such materials in compiling the life of Fr. Doyle. And since his life was issued, the biography of a fellow-religious, Fr. James Cullen, has been published by a brother Jesuit, who speaks thus in the preface: "There never has

[18] Delahaye, *St. John Berchmans,* New York 1921, p. 138.
[19] *Summarium Constitutionum S.J.,* n 41; cited in full p. 332 below.

been any difficulty felt about publishing private letters and papers of the dead when such publication—even though it may reveal faults—does not on the whole injure their reputation. In point of fact—except in the case of the few saints who have been ordered by obedience to write their biographies—all lives of saints consist to a large extent of documents, letters and conversations, which were never meant for the public. The revealing of the secret lives of God's friends—even though it bring to light many of their shortcomings—is an edifying thing. Therefore we can well believe that such men, now in heaven and beyond all danger of foolish thoughts, willingly consent to God's glory being promoted by the description of the working of His grace upon their souls." [20]

The propriety of publishing private spiritual notes has indeed never been questioned by any responsible theologian; legitimacy, even for a confessor, of revealing the graces and virtues of a deceased penitent is universally admitted.[21] It has never been suggested that a penitent could pledge his confessor to silence after his death; much less could a religious bind his Superior.

It was, therefore, rightly decided, by those on whom the decision rested, that God's interests would be best observed, in the case of Fr. Doyle's papers, "by formally violating a request which had been inspired by motives that had ceased to count"—to use the phrase I employed in the preface to the first edition of this book. It is only by disobeying his pious wishes—an act which, now that he is beyond the temptations of earth, he will surely forgive—that his intimate self-

[20] L. McKenna S.J., *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen S.J.*, 1923, pref. pp. viii. f. A list of Jesuits, beginning with Ignatius himself, whose spiritual journals have been published, is given below on p. 133; a list which could be considerably extended. "I have never been able to convince myself," says Fr. Martindale in his life of *Charles D. Plater, S.J.* (1922, p. 31), "that, just because a man is dead, one has the right to publish what during his life he never would have shown to anybody." In spite of his lack of conviction, Fr. Martindale not only read Fr. Plater's notebooks but published extracts from them.

[21] Nemo dubitat post mortem sancti viri extraordinarias gratias illi factas revelare.—Ballerini-Palmieri, *Opus theologicum morale* (de sacramento poenitentiae § 953), 1893 [2], v. 518. S. Ignatius forbade his confessor, Diego de Eguía S.J., to speak of his spiritual secrets during his lifetime; he died six weeks before Ignatius.—*Scripta de S. Ignatio*, 1 (1904) 509.

revelations have been reverently rifled, in the hope that his good work for souls may be thus prolonged and that though dead he may yet speak to us. There is little doubt that the chance, the providential chance, of his death as a martyr of charity on a far-off Flemish battlefield, rescued from the fate he had destined for them, spiritual notes which have been, and will be, a source of consolation and inspiration to innumerable souls.[22] To those who only know the Jesuits of fiction or of Pascal, such a life as Fr. Doyle's will be a convincing proof that, as he declared when yet a novice, "the Society was instituted to glorify the Name of Jesus by its learning, by its zeal, but above all by its holiness." [23] To those who know Catholicism only as an institution, this biography will be testimony that, in a world teeming with self-indulgence and callousness, the Church still fosters the love of Jesus and the following of the Crucified. The most effective apologetic is to be found, not in learned dissertations, but in the lives of the saints; for, as an early martyr pointed out, "Christianity is not the work of persuasiveness but of greatness." [24]

A. O'R.

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[22] "The letter of his wish has been wisely overruled, in view of the fact that he would have desired, had it appealed to him so, to continue his apostolate after his death; and this, by means of this striking volume, he will certainly do for many years to come."—*Month,* April 1920, p. 384. "After reading it, all will agree in the feeling of thankfulness that the intimate papers from which his biographer draws were not destroyed."—*Irish Theological Quarterly* 15 (1920) 278. "That they were thus preserved, has been to many, and will be to many thousands in the years to come, a subject for deep thankfulness."—Fr. Lucas in *Messenger,* January 1922, p. 10. "We welcome the publication of these intimate revelations, if only in proof that there are great souls in our own day, as in the Middle Ages, who find in the austerities of self-immolation a quickening of the sap of the spiritual life." —*Tablet,* 8th May, 1920.

[23] Page 15 below. One does not expect to find this type of criticism in a responsible Catholic review: "He was nearer the Salvationist freelance than the modern conception of the Jesuit. We look to the Jesuits for scholarship, educational theory, and professional advice in finding lines of least resistance." —S.L. in *Dublin Review,* July 1920, p. 132.

[24] S. Ignatius, *Ad Romanos* iii. 3.

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FATHER WILLIAM DOYLE, S.J.

Chapter I

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH (1873–1891)

IT is chiefly in the light of a man's subsequent development that the incidents of childhood become interesting and significant, for the child is father of the man. It is often in the artless sayings and doings of the child, and in the impulsive spontaneity of the youth, that we can best discern that groundwork of natural character which in the man is generally concealed by conventionality or self-control. Unfortunately in the case of the present biography the records are scanty, but by collecting some scattered anecdotes and reminiscences, it has been possible to trace in the boyhood of the future Jesuit and Apostle some of those human and lovable characteristics which remained to the end.

William Joseph Gabriel Doyle was born at Melrose, Dalkey, Co. Dublin, on 3rd March, 1873. His father was Mr. Hugh Doyle, an ...cial of the High Court of Justice in Ireland, who died on 28th March, 1924, in his ninety-second year; his mother was Christina Mary Doyle, *née* Byrne.[1] Willie was the youngest of seven children, four boys and three girls. The eldest and youngest of the girls married; the second became a Sister of Mercy. The eldest boy after a short stay in the Jesuit Novitiate entered Holy Cross College,

[1] She died at 7 A.M on 19th March, 1915, at the age of 83. Willie had just returned from a Mission in Glasgow and so was able to be with her at the end and to say Mass immediately for her. Next year, in a letter from the Front (17th March, 1916) he writes to his Father: "I shall not forget the anniversary on Sunday, though I doubt if she needs our prayers."

Clonliffe, whence he passed to the College of the Propaganda, Rome. Ten days before his ordination he caught fever and died in 1887 in the twenty-eighth year of his age. The second son entered the legal profession and became Recorder of Galway. Willie's third brother, a few years older than himself, and the inseparable companion of his boyhood, became a Jesuit.

Willie was a frail and delicate child, though like most highly strung children, he had great reserves of energy. All through life, indeed, ill-health was one of his great trials, and for some years before his death he suffered acutely from an internal complaint. But, curiously enough, his nearest approach to death was due, not to sickness, but to an accident. When he was quite a little fellow, his nurse one night placed a lighted candle on his little cot, probably to enable herself to read or sew. The nurse fell asleep, and the candle overturned and set the bed clothes on fire. Fortunately his father, who was sleeping in the next room, was awakened by the smoke and rushed into the nursery. He found the cot on fire, and little Willie fast asleep with his legs curled up, as though he felt the fire creeping towards him. In an instant the child was lifted out of bed, and the mattress and bed clothes thrown out through the window. As a military chaplain Father Willie once laughingly alluded to this escape as his first experience under fire.

For all his future holiness, Willie was by no means a stilted or unnatural child. He played games and he played pranks; and though he cannot be said to have been naughty, he was also far from being irritatingly or obtrusively pious. It is consoling to find that, like most of us, he played at being a soldier. He was seven years old when it was decided that he should emerge from the stage of velvet suit and long curls. On his return from the fateful visit to the hairdresser's, his mother seemed sad on seeing Willie with his shorn locks. But the little fellow himself was delighted, and sturdily insisted that soldiers did not wear curls, at least not nowadays. His mother had to make a soldier's suit for him, with red stripes down the sides; and when he won a great

battle, a couple of stripes had to be added to one sleeve! This is how his old nurse describes his youthful exploits:

"His love to be a soldier even from his babyhood was wonderful—to fight for Ireland. He would arrange his soldiers and have them all ready for battle. The nursery was turned upside down, to have plenty of room for fighting, building castles, putting up tents, all for his soldiers. Poor nurse looked on, but was too fond of him to say anything. He and a brother with some other little boys were having a great battle one day. He was fighting for Ireland; his brother was fighting for England, as he said his grandmother was English. There was a flag put up to see who was able to get it; the battle went on for some time, then in a moment, Master Willie dashed in and had the flag in his hand, though they were all guarding it. They could not tell how he got it; he was the youngest and smallest of the lot."

How curiously and prophetically appropriate is this characteristic of him, who was to be enrolled in the Company of Jesus and to die on the battlefield as a soldier of Christ!

There are many indications that Willie's youthful militarism was prompted by something deeper than a primitive instinct of pugnacity. Just as in after years he loved to aim at the Ignatian ideal of "distinguishing oneself in the service of one's Eternal King," so, even as a youngster, he felt the call to be foremost in energy and service. Long before he read of the saint of Manresa, he had a natural affinity with the soldier of Pamplona. And it was not always the mimic battle of the nursery; even at this early age he started real warfare, he began a life-long struggle against *himself*. At the beginning of Lent, when he was quite a little boy, an old Aunt, chancing to go into his Mother's bedroom, found him gesticulating and talking in front of the mirror. "You villain, you wretch," he kept saying to his reflection, "I'll starve you, I'll murder you! Not a sweet will you get, not a bit of cake will you get!"

This is one of the few glimpses we obtain of Willie's interior life during his boyhood. Even of his maturer soul-struggles we should know little or nothing were it not for the chance

preservation of his notes and diaries. There is a danger lest these revelations of penance and mortification should mislead a reader, who was not personally acquainted with Fr. Doyle, into fancying that he was exteriorly repellent or gloomily ascetic. Throughout his life he retained a fund of humour and kindliness; no one would suspect his slow struggle for self-mastery and perfection. That even in boyhood he sought self-conquest and recollection, and experienced the working of God's grace, we can have no doubt. There is no record, however, save in the archives of Him who seeth in secret, where even the sparrow's fall is registered and the hairs of our heads are numbered. But neither in youth nor in after life was his virtue fugitive and cloistered; his light so shone before men that they saw his good works, his thoughtful kindness and self-sacrificing charity.

No man, it is said, is a hero to his valet; at any rate, domestic servants are apt to be severe critics. Willie, however, was deservedly a favourite. He always tried to shield the maids when anything went astray or was neglected. He was ever on the lookout for an opportunity of some act of thoughtfulness. Thus sometimes after a big dinner at Melrose, the cook would come down next morning and find the fire lighting and the dinner things washed. Willie had been playing the fairy! Again, whenever a maid was looking ill, he used to volunteer privately to do her work. A servant of the family, who gave many years of faithful service, still remembers her first arrival at Dalkey. As she was timorously proceeding to Melrose, she met the two brothers walking on stilts along the road. "How are you, Anne?" said Willie, divining that this was the new maid. He alighted and insisted on taking whatever she was carrying. Before she had her things off, he had tea ready for her.

"I know I was really awkward after leaving the rough country," writes Anne. "I had got orders to have the boots cleaned that evening. But the good saint took them out to the coach-house and brought them in shining. No one knew only Kate (the parlourmaid) he did it so quietly. To put it off he made the remark, 'I dare say you have no such

thing in the country as blacking.' Not understanding the coal fire, and while I was learning, he would run downstairs and have the fire lighting and the kettle on by the time I would arrive. Then when breakfast was ready, he would come to the kitchen and ask how did I get on with the fire that morning?"

For the poor people on Dalkey Hill Willie constituted himself into a Conference of St. Vincent de Paul. He raised funds by saving up his pocket-money, by numberless acts of economy and self-denial; he begged for his poor, he got the cook to make soup, he pleaded for delicacies to carry to the sick. Once he went to the family apothecary and ordered several large bottles of cod-liver oil for a poor consumptive woman, and then presented the bill to his father! He bought a store of tea with which under many pledges of secrecy he entrusted the parlourmaid. On this he used to draw when in the course of his wanderings he happened to come across some poor creature without the means of providing herself with the cup that cheers. He by no means confined himself merely to the bringing of relief. He worked for his poor, he served them, he sat down and talked familiarly with them, he read books for the sick, he helped to tidy the house, he provided snuff and tobacco for the aged. One of Willie's cases —if such an impersonal word may be used—was a desolate old woman whose children were far away. One day noticing that the house was dirty and neglected, he went off and purchased some lime and a brush, and then returned and whitewashed the whole house from top to bottom. He then went down on his knees and scrubbed the floors, amid the poor woman's ejaculations of protest and gratitude. No one knew of this but the cook and parlourmaid who lent him their aprons to save his clothes and kept dinner hot for him until he returned late in the evening. While thus aiding his poor friends temporally, he did not forget their souls. He contrived skilfully to remind them of their prayers and the sacraments; he also strongly advocated temperance. There was one old fellow on the Hill whom Willie had often unsuccessfully tried to reform. After years of hard drinking he lay dying, and

could not be induced to see a priest. For eight hours Willie stayed praying by the bedside of the half-conscious dying sinner. Shortly before the end he came to himself, asked for the priest and made his peace with God. Only when he had breathed his last, did Willie return to Melrose. His first missionary victory!

When we hear of these acts of charity and zeal exercised at an age which is often associated with selfish thoughtlessness, we may be inclined to imagine that Willie Doyle was a prim, stilted, "goody-goody" sort of boy. Nothing of the kind. He had a wonderful freshness and spontaneity. One never could feel that his kindness was artificially produced or that his goodness was forced. His virtue, like his laugh, had the genuine ring in it. One of his most endearing characteristics throughout life was his sense of humour. "Don't take yourself too seriously," he once said to a rather lugubrious would-be-saint; "a sense of humour is one of the greatest aids to sanctity." As a boy he was full of humour, even when he was doing good. He once brought to one of his poor people a carefully wrapped parcel which was joyfully acclaimed as a pound of butter; but when extricated it proved to be a stone! Next day, however, the real article, with much more besides, was brought to console the good woman. Sometimes Willie was able to combine kindness and fun. Thus, in order to shield the maids, he used to rake and settle the cinders on top of the ashes, and he would then wait for his grandmother—who had a little weakness for insisting that the cinders were sifted—and always enjoyed her remark, "Oh, how nicely cook has the cinders riddled!" With his brother Charlie he loved to engage in fun and frolic. As schoolboys they used to amuse themselves by dressing up as "nigger minstrels," blackening their faces and hands. For this purpose Willie saved up and bought a banjo. All the household, including the maids, used to be assembled for these entertainments. Some of us who feel alas! that we have too little in common with Fr. William Doyle, can thus at least claim human kinship with Willie Doyle!

Between Willie and his brother, Charlie, there was a close bond of attachment from early days of childhood. As they were only a few years apart in age, they were naturally more closely united with one another than with their elder brothers and sisters. Together they learnt their first letters, together they fished and bathed, and built themselves a wonderful house in the branches of a mighty elm, together they knelt and prayed. Their prayers and catechism and all things religious were lovingly superintended by the future nun of the family, whom her young brothers, with boys' quick instinct for hitting off a character with a name, dubbed "the missionary," thereby also recording a tribute to their sister's religious influence. Willie's devotion to his elder brother was remarkable even in a household where all the members of the family were so united and affectionate. Nothing was too good for Charlie, everything was shared with him—sweets, secrets, sorrows. Wherever he went, Willie followed, ready to run, to fetch and carry at a word from his brother; and when bed-time came the last good-night, conveyed in a mysterious formula, was always to Charlie. And these two who as boys played and studied together, fought their mimic battles together, and shared their little joys and sorrows, were destined not to be divided in life. For in ways mysterious they both joined the Society of Jesus.

In September, 1884, at the age of eleven, Willie went to Ratcliffe College, Leicestershire, conducted by the Fathers of the Institute of Charity, where his elder brother had already spent a year. Here in the cloisters and classrooms of Pugin's beautiful college six pleasant and profitable years were passed. A good place was consistently secured at the various examinations, and every year saw one or more prizes brought back to delight the dear ones at home. Willie excelled at sports; he was for several years a member of the cricket eleven and of the football team. This proficiency at games stood him in good stead years afterwards when he became one of the Prefects at Clongowes. He was a general favourite among his school-fellows, and his brother-in-law, at whose

house in Sheffield he usually spent the Christmas vacation, declared in a letter that Willie was "the nicest schoolboy he had ever met."

Willie's love of plants and flowers, which showed itself in his delight to work in the garden at Melrose, was fortunately fostered by one of his masters at Ratcliffe. Several of his notebooks still exist with coloured drawings of flowers named in Latin and English, also many cases containing specimens pressed, dried, mounted and catalogued by himself. His interest was not always merely scientific or aesthetic. On one occasion he completely stripped the tennis-court, carefully levelled it and replaced the sods, and, by cutting away an encroaching embankment, considerably enlarged it. With his brother's help he once planted a plot of potatoes; the crop was sold to the household at the highest market price, and was largely consumed by the two brothers! Doubtless, the neighbouring poor benefited by the transaction.

Though vacation time was passed at home in boyish games and amusements, yet, as the years went on, the more serious side began to show itself in Willie's character. It was then that he developed more and more his love for the poor and helpless. At times he would slip away from the cricket and tennis and seek out his poor on Dalkey Hill, where "Master Willie" was a welcome visitor. There was one family of his own name, with many ramifications on the Hill, which was the object of his special predilection. By a curious coincidence one of the first men he met on joining his regiment after his appointment as military chaplain was a William Doyle, a grandson of his old friend on Dalkey Hill.

In the summer of 1890 Willie left Ratcliffe. During his last year at college his health had given cause for anxiety. It was therefore decided that he should remain quietly at home, in order to build up his strength and reflect on his future. What this future would be, those who knew him never doubted. It had long been an open secret in the family that Willie would be a priest. He himself had never any doubt or hesitation. Beneath all his boyish fun and lightheartedness there lay, discernible to a careful observer, a life

Father Doyle at the Age of Fifteen.

Made in Ireland.

of deep purposive faith. This was shown not only in his pure upright character, his generous unselfishness, and his love of Christ's poor, but also in his childlike piety. Long before the decree of Pope Pius X. which restored frequent and daily communion, Willie was a weekly communicant. His devotion to our Blessed Lady was also noticeable; he always went to her altar when he paid a visit to the church. The priesthood seemed but the logical development of a life thus begun. It was of the secular priesthood that Willie was thinking. "I came home about the middle of July with the intention of entering Clonliffe," he writes to his sister a year later. "The strange part of the whole business is that just before I left Ratcliffe I told Father Davis, our Spiritual Director, that I would as soon shoot myself as enter a religious Order!" "But," he adds, "man proposes and God disposes; so it was in my case."

In August, 1890, Willie paid a few days' visit to St. Stanislaus' College, Tullamore, the Novitiate of the Irish Province of the Society of Jesus, where his brother, Charlie, had entered ten months previously. One day during the visit the subject of Willie's vocation came up for discussion. Charlie knew that Willie was going to be a priest. But was it a secular priest or a religious? "I hope soon to enter Clonliffe," said Willie. "Did you ever think of the religious life?" asked his brother. "Never!" was the emphatic reply. "I have always wanted to fill the gap left by Fred's death, and to become a secular priest." "But do you know anything about the religious state?" persisted the zealous novice. "No, nothing," said Willie; "but in any case I would never come to this hole of a place!" This led to an animated discussion concerning religious Orders in general and the Society of Jesus in particular. Willie was so far shaken as to accept a copy of St. Alphonsus Liguori's work on the Religious State,[2] with a promise to read it and to think it over. "I uttered a fervent *Deo Gratias* when I found myself on my way home," writes Willie, "thanking my stars that I had not the honour

[2] *Instructions and Considerations on the Religious State.* Eng. trans. (no date) published by the Art and Book Co. See pp. 122, 123.

of putting N.S.J. after my name. Then came a spell of four months' idleness at home, during which someone was praying hard for a brother of his—and not in vain." The final decision was taken on Christmas Day, 1890. "I was alone in the drawing-room," he says, "when Father came in and asked me if I had yet made up my mind as to my future career." I answered 'Yes'—that I intended to become a Jesuit. I remember how I played my joy and happiness into the piano after thus giving myself openly to Jesus."

On 31st March, 1891, Willie entered the Jesuit Novitiate of Tullabeg, near Tullamore, and, as he puts it himself, "was immediately seized upon by Charlie and initiated into the mysteries and black magic of Jesuit life."

Chapter II

FROM NOVICESHIP TO PRIESTHOOD (1891–1907)

(I.) TULLABEG, (1891–1893.)

WHEN half way through his second year's novitiate Willie's health began to give anxiety to his superiors, and a complete nervous breakdown following a fire at the College led to his being sent to his home in Dalkey for some months. In fact there was question at this time of his having to leave the novitiate for good owing to his health. Several doctors declared he was quite unfit for the strain of religious life, while superiors were almost unanimous in their opinion that he should not be kept. But Willie clung to his vocation, which he felt was from God; and the Provincial, Fr. Timothy Kenny, who from the first had formed a high idea of the young novice, declaring him to be "as good as gold," supported him warmly. A few months of his native air and among his beloved poor on the Hill, who joyfully welcomed back "Master Willie" and saw very much of him now, restored strength and steadiness of nerve, and after making good in the novitiate the time he had spent at home, Willie was allowed to take the three vows of religion on the 15th August, 1893.

Some letters written by him at this time bear witness not only to his happiness but to that sense of humour and fun which thus early in his religious life became characteristic of him. "The time down here is most extraordinary!" he writes to his mother, Christmas Eve, 1891. "They have only twenty minutes to the hour and about six or seven of these are called a day—at least that is the conclusion I have come to. Well, having discovered that Christmas is at hand, I also discovered (and I am very sorry I did) that countless letters have to be

written. The very first is going to be to your own loved self to wish you the old wish that is ever new: A merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

"At this point an animated discussion took place between the writer and the builders of the Crib as to which of the two animals found among the Crib figures was the donkey and which the ox. 'O(a)x them,' said I; while someone suggested that if they walked away, the ass would follow, as birds of a feather flock together. Eventually the unfortunate ass was ordered to do duty as one of the kings, and by splitting the ox in two, a capital cow was made out of one half, while the other half served as the donkey. Such are the advantages of holy poverty!

"As you see we contrive to get a great deal of fun out of simple things, and since there are thirty young scamps like myself down here, life manages to be fairly lively. Up to this the weather has been very mild, but a touch of frost has come at last and I expect we shall have skating soon.

"And now my time (a precious thing here) is up, and I must stop if I am to get this off to you for to-morrow. I am very well and very happy, and that is what you want to know most. Is it not, dearest Mother?"

In another letter written on the same day he expresses once more his sheer delirium of happiness. "Perhaps you would like to know," he writes, "how things are going with me here. Well, I am as happy as the day is long, though at times, I confess, I find it hard to keep from turning somersaults, jumping out of the window, coming downstairs head first, or from some other mad freak of the kind. I often think that if there was any madness running in the family, it found a resting-place in me! I suppose you heard that I have been through the Long Retreat, as it is called, the retreat of thirty days, which every Jesuit novice has to make. It was a wonderful time. I do not think that I ever spent such a happy time in all my life."

The only other letter extant is also redolent of his characteristic humour. "I must thank everybody through you," he writes to his Mother in April, 1892, "for the dear letters and

good wishes for my birthday. More especially am I grateful for the big box of sweets from your own loved self. That same box of sweets, I am sorry to say, has met with an untimely end. It is a sad tale, the telling of which makes one's mouth, I mean eyes, water. The box was left in the recreation room for inspection, but when I returned it was gone. The only answer to my anxious inquiries came from a solemn voice in the corner of the room; 'It has been carried off by the influenza!' I suppose you all must be thinking that I have met a like end, seeing that it is so long since you heard from me."

So much for Willie Doyle's joyous start in his religious life. It is clear from the records of his later career that this frolicsome gaiety was, not only not inconsistent with, but actually consequent upon, a hidden life of interior earnestness and devotion. But only a few stray sheets survive to give us all too meagre information concerning the inner life of the novice. Fortunately one precious little document remains to attest his astonishing fervour.

A.M.D.G. ac B.V.M.

My Martyrdom for Mary's Sake.

"Darling Mother Mary, in preparation for the glorious martyrdom which I feel assured thou art going to obtain for me, I, thy most unworthy child, on this the first day of thy month, solemnly commence my life of slow martyrdom by earnest hard work and constant self-denial. *With my blood I promise thee to keep this resolution, do thou, sweet Mother, assist me and obtain for me the one favour I wish and long for: To die a Jesuit Martyr.*

May 1st, 1893.

May God's will, not mine, be done! Amen."

The words here italicised are in the original written with the writer's own blood for ink; and on each side of the word

"martyr" is a smudge of blood, as if thus to seal his compact with our Lady.[1] One feels that it is a sacred privilege to gaze after the lapse of thirty years on this touching contract between the Jesuit novice and his heavenly Mother, chivalrously sealed with his blood. Think of the twenty-four years of life which remained to the novice! Right well did he keep his compact; his was a "life of slow martyrdom by earnest hard work and constant self-denial." And the compact was kept in heaven also. As on earth of yore, "Mary kept all these words, pondering them in her heart." Our Blessed Lady obtained for him the one favour he wished and longed for. William Doyle died a Jesuit Martyr.[2]

Some reflections and resolutions which he recorded during the triduum of preparation for his vows, have also happily survived and may here be set down.

"It depends entirely on myself whether I become a saint or not. If I *wish* and *will* to be one, half the battle is over. Certainly God's help is secured. Every fresh effort to become holy gets fresh grace, and grace is what makes the soul holy and pleasing to God.

"God has a work for each one to do; the devil also. For each one can be an influence for good or evil to those around. No one goes to heaven or hell alone. Unless I am holy, I may do the devil's work. The closer I try to imitate the Sacred Heart, the holier shall I become. How can I get nearer that Divine Heart than by receiving Holy Communion often

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[1] Similarly S. John Berchmans signed with his blood his vow to defend the Immaculate Conception.—Goldie, *Life of S. J. Berchmans,* 1912 [7] p. 223; Delahaye, *S. J. Berchmans,* New York, 1921, p. 138. So Père Eymard (Tenaillon, *Ven. Pierre Julien Eymard,* New York, 1914, p. 14): "These are the resolutions that I have signed with my own blood before the Tabernacle." Also S. Margaret Mary: *Life* (published by the Visitation Monastery of Paray-le-Monial), Eng. tr. 1912, p. 42.

[2] Compare S. Ignatius's desire of martyrdom: *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 2 (1918) 552. Even as a boy Fr. Doyle longed to be a martyr (see pp. 385, 414; and even after his failure to secure being sent on a foreign mission, he never abandoned hope of martyrdom. "I must not give up hope of being a martyr," he writes during his Retreat of September, 1910, "but prepare for this happiness by leading a martyr's life." It is almost as true of Fr. Doyle as of Blessed Charles Spinola, S.J. (martyred in Japan, 1622) that "the thought of martyrdom dominated his whole life and inspired his most important resolutions."—Broeckaert, *Vie du bienheureux Charles Spinola,* Brussels 1868, p. 6.

and fervently? The Sacred Heart will then be next my own and will teach me quickest and best how to be a saint.

"Can I refuse to become holy when God Himself entreats me to be holy? 'Walk before Me and be perfect.' 'Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' Another great motive for becoming a saint—the wish, the command of God! I have been called by God to be a member of the Society of His Son. To be a true Jesuit I must be a close imitator of Jesus Christ, an 'alter Christus.' The Society was instituted to glorify the Name of Jesus by its learning, by its zeal, but above all by its holiness. I must, therefore, strain after three things: to become learned, an authority on all subjects, not for self or the glory of self, but for God and the glory of God; to become a lover of souls; to become holy, this first and foremost, because the Jesuit without sanctity is no true son of Ignatius.

"O loving Saviour, forgive me the past, accept me repentant, help me, for I am going to become with Thy assistance—A Thorough Jesuit and a Great Saint."

(2.) CLONGOWES, (1894–1898.)

Soon after taking the vows of religion Willie's health again broke down. So once more he was sent to recuperate in his native air and as before with good results. By the following August he was able to take up his new duties in Clongowes Wood College to which he was now assigned. Willie was stationed in Clongowes during two periods, from 1894 to 1898, and again from 1901 to 1903. His first year there was spent in teaching, the other five as prefect. He showed considerable ability as a teacher, but other qualities which he possessed decided his superiors to entrust him with the difficult work of prefecting. As prefect he won remarkable success and popularity. He was a good organiser, excelled in all outdoor sports, while he threw himself with characteristic energy into the interests and activities of the little world around him. With the boys he was a favourite. He was very kind and very just, two qualities that appeal to boys and win their respect and

esteem. Yet there was a certain awe mingled with their affection, for, as they used to say, they could never quite make him out. This was the result of his imperturbability and evenness of temper, joined to a strong will and virile character. He was never angry with the boys, yet he always had his way; they simply had to do what he wanted them to do.

One who was under him as a boy writes: "I first met Fr. Doyle when I was a small boy at Clongowes. He was then Third Line Prefect, and had under his care some seventy or eighty boys ranging from ten to fifteen years of age. This particular set were rowdy and quarrelsome, and during my first year in the Line there were two periods, at least, of acute disturbance. Not that the trouble circled round Fr. Doyle or was directed against him, nor was it caused by any act on his part, but arose out of feuds among the boys themselves. The manner in which Fr. Doyle dealt with this difficult situation impressed me even at the time, and I have been more deeply impressed again and again in retrospection. Hot tempered by nature, I believe, he never allowed himself to be carried into arbitrary action by the intemperate or unreasonable conduct of those in his charge. He was firm, but never unjust; indeed, if he erred at all, it was on the side of leniency. But apart from his self-control, the quality that struck me most was his optimism, his breezy cheerfulness in the midst of difficulties. He never lost his good spirits; he never seemed to be depressed; he never appeared to consider for a moment how trouble in his department affected himself; he was intent always on setting others on the right track.

"I recall one memorable scene. It is a common occurrence in Clongowes for one cricket club to challenge another. The consequences for the loser are serious, since the beaten side is liable to confiscation of its bats, pads, in fact all its good gear, and to get in exchange the battered property of its rival. This is the material aspect of the result, but there is a more important element at stake, the loss or gain, namely, of prestige. In the instance to which I refer, the game was keenly contested and feeling ran high. The junior club won eventually by a narrow margin. Whereupon the beaten side declared

SCHOOLBOY 1884
NOVICE 1892
SCHOLASTIC 1896

Made in Ireland.

that the victors had 'doctored' the score. Immediately there was uproar, and quiet was restored only when someone proposed that Fr. Doyle should be called in to arbitrate. He gave the case against the defeated eleven. This verdict so exasperated one of the boys that he called Fr. Doyle a 'd—— cheat!' This outburst cleared the atmosphere and produced a sudden calm, as nobody knew what would follow this amazing piece of impudence. But Fr. Doyle did nothing. Two or three days passed, and the culprit, who was prepared to take a flogging and hate his Prefect to the end of his days, began to grow sorry for his conduct when he saw that no move was being made against him. At last he apologised, offering to accept punishment, but Fr. Doyle only laughed good humouredly, and gave him biscuits and lemonade and a few pieces of sound advice. Fr. Doyle won a fast friend and a most loyal supporter, but his self-control under the circumstances needed character.

"Fr. Doyle's example worked good. His cheerfulness, his energy, his enthusiasm were infectious and inspiring. His whole conduct was marked by gentleness and a kindly thoughtfulness that gained him loyalty and affection. In the playing fields he was a tower of strength. I can still recall the admiration with which I watched him play full-back, or stump a batsman who had his toe barely off the ground. But above all he gave the impression to us boys of one who lived much in the presence of God. I know one boy, at least, who entered the Society of Jesus, partly, at any rate, because Fr. Doyle was such a splendid man and splendid Jesuit."

Another who lived and worked with Willie in his early days in the Society and at Clongowes writes: "Thinking of Fr. Willie Doyle, I recall especially his gay, light-hearted ways, the cheery laugh and snatch of song with which he enlivened recreation hours or holiday excursions. Into the latter he threw himself with zest and was an excellent companion. He could not resist the temptation of indulging from time to time in a practical joke. Practical jokes are not welcomed by everyone, but he carried them through with such good humour and playfulness that the victim was soon tempted to relax and join

in the laugh. Indeed his love of a joke never wholly deserted him. He grew graver as he had more and more to do with the burdens and cares of life—and how many were the persons whose burdens he helped to carry!—but even to the end he retained in a large measure his gaiety of heart and his cheery outlook. Nothing seemed able to depress him for any length of time.

"One did not have to live long with him to see that his gaiety of disposition, an essential part of his nature though it was, was still only the sparkle on the surface, and that below it ran the current of a downright earnest religious life—a current that deepened and gained in strength as he advanced in life. Not that he made any ostentation of piety or asceticism —there was not the slightest sign of this about him. On the contrary, he was ever reserved about himself and guarded closely the secrets of his spiritual life. But many little acts of self-restraint, self-denial and self-sacrifice, made me feel that he was trying seriously and steadily to acquire the solid virtues which befit a man who would give himself wholly to God.

"After the novitiate and juniorate Fr. Doyle and I were together for some years in Clongowes Wood College. In the life there, with its larger liberty of action, new phases in his character showed themselves. He began to display a more than common spirit of initiative and enterprise, an energy and resourcefulness in carrying out what he had undertaken, and a marked tenacity of purpose. His production of *The Mikado* may be instanced. For some considerable time elaborate plays had not been attempted at Clongowes, owing to the heavy demands on time and attention made by the Intermediate examinations. When Mr. Doyle obtained permission to try his hand at producing this opera, he seemed to be attempting the impossible. Few good singers and actors were known to be among the boys. Everything was wanting, scenery, costumes, and the money to buy them; and above all time to practise, for the studies could in no way be allowed to suffer. There appeared to be a sufficiency of one thing only—cold water; and that was freely poured on the scheme. Mr. Doyle kept

his own counsel and set to work quietly and determinedly. He unearthed talent, trained his actors and singers assiduously, enlisted help, and by his tact, energy and perseverance, he overcame every obstacle, and in the end *The Mikado* was a triumphant success and proved to be one of the most brilliant performances ever witnessed on the stage of Clongowes.

"As another instance of his spirit of initiative I may mention the starting of the college magazine, *The Clongownian,* of which he was the Founder and the first Editor. Here again there were the usual difficulties and opposition to a new venture, but these were put aside with unfailing courage and perseverance, and the first number of *The Clongownian* appeared during the Christmas of 1895.

"Though not a Clongownian Mr. Doyle had much to do with the founding of the Clongowes Union which was proposed and worked up in *The Clongownian* for a considerable time before it actually came into being.

"Viewing his character as a whole, it seems to me that the fundamental quality in it was courage—courage of a fine and generous type. When confronted with difficulties, with danger or labour or pain, instead of hesitating or weakly compromising, he was rather braced to a new and more intense resolve to see the matter out. Give in, he would not. It was this courage, supported, no doubt, by a natural liveliness of disposition, that enabled him to preserve through life his gaiety of heart and to face his troubles as they came with a smiling countenance; it was this courage, too, that steeled him to hold fast to his purpose no matter what difficulties or obstacles might arise."

We have here the testimony of one who for many years lived and worked with Fr., or, as he was then, Mr. Doyle. It is the more valuable as the writer could only guess at the inner life of him whom he pictured as remarkably courageous and encouragingly cheerful. Indeed, no intimate jottings of this period have survived; so we can picture Willie Doyle only as he appeared to one or two contemporaries or as he portrayed himself, or rather his work, in a few extant letters. The earliest of these, written to his Father on Christmas Eve, gives us a humorous sketch of his first experience as an examiner.

"At last," he writes, "I have got a quiet moment, the first, I should say, for the last week. For last week was last week before vacation; and anyone who knows anything about school-life knows that week is no time of heavenly rest. You would throw up your hands in horror were you to see my room at the present moment. It is a scene of chaos and disorder that would discourage and frighten even that patient and persevering arranger of confusion and disorder, the Little Mother. For the past week examinations have been in full swing. Now it is a comparatively easy task to sit down and set an examination paper that will keep a couple of hundred boys hard at work for three hours; but it is quite a different proposition to wade through and correct the output of the said boys during these hours. Can you wonder, then, that my pale and emaciated countenance grew still paler and more emaciated, and that my hair, usually so well-behaved, stood on end, as day by day I watched the pile of examination papers rise higher on my table? But gazing would never reduce that pile, so with a cry to heaven for help I plunged at it and fought my way through it to the last sheet. The work is done; but I could stand a siege behind the piles of papers which litter the floor, the table, almost every inch of my room, while the reference books, reports, lists of prize-winners, and lists of those who did not get prizes would supply ammunition enough to drive off even the victorious Japs.

"However, not only are examination papers corrected but the boys are packed home, and for once in the past four months peace and quiet reign in Clongowes, and I am sitting down to wish you all a right merry Christmas. May the Infant Jesus bring all in the Old Home much grace and happiness! I fancy, however, you will hardly have as joyous a Christmas as I am anticipating we shall have here. Our Mother, the Society, enters fully into the spirit of this glad Season and allows her children to kick over the traces a little during Christmastide, due regard being had for the Ten Commandments. And I assure you the younger generation of this place can contrive a vast amount of innocent fun out of very simple material!"

In a similar strain, after he has become prefect, he writes to his Mother in May, 1903, apologising for the shortcomings of his correspondence. "Indeed," he says, "I have few spare moments in the day; my hundred odd little ruffians see to that! There is a constant chorus of 'Oh, Sir, you promised to mend my bat.' 'Did you write for my running-pumps, Sir?' 'Please, Sir, will you do this or that for me?' And so on all day long till I ask myself, Do these little villains think I have nothing else to do but dance attendance on them? They are, however, really such good little chaps that I cannot refuse."

The only other extant letter written during his time in Clongowes comes nearest to giving us a glimpse of his inner life.

"I really intended to send you my Easter greetings in good time," he wrote to his sister on 8th April, 1902. "But with one thing or another I found myself in Holy Week almost before I well realised that Lent had begun. And with Holy Week came a multiplicity of duties which left little spare time; and then the Easter vacation, vacation at least for the boys, but not vacation for us poor prefects, for we had to be on duty all day. Now however that I am a bit free, I wish you every happiness and blessing, with abundance of grace to make you all that our dear Lord wishes you to be. May you always be faithful to His call.

"I was ever so glad to learn that you are keeping well and strong. I have seldom felt better, thank God; and the best proof of this is that I am able to get through my day's work—and it is not always a light one—as well as any man. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for your prayers for myself and my boys, and also for your promise to continue the same. Believe me, you are doing a real apostolic work in praying for these dear little children. I could tell you things that have happened which would show you that your good prayers and those of others have not been thrown away. I have many an anxious hour to go through and many difficulties to face; but the thought that good souls are interceding on my behalf makes the burden light." "Pray hard," he adds, "for your wild scamp of a brother who is just as anxious as yourself to make some little progress in the spiritual life."

That, even between his noviceship and his ordination, Willie Doyle was anxious to make progress in the spiritual life will be clear to those who read the story of his inner life as a priest. But possibly the reader may feel that the fourteen years which stretched from his vows to his ordination, for which scarcely any intimate spiritual records exist, seem disconnected, not only from his first flush of youthful fervour as a novice, but especially from his wonderfully intense interior life in after years. There seems indeed to the outward glance an enormous difference between the claustral seclusion and silence of Tullabeg and the busy bustling life of Clongowes, between the laborious study-immersed philosopher or theologian and the zealous self-immolated missioner. We find it curious that the demure introspective novice should rather suddenly develop into a distracted college prefect immersed in games and plays, and that the erstwhile student of metaphysics and dogma should immediately descend into another noviceship and emerge as an ascetic and a mystic. Now, if we would rightly understand the present biography, we must realise that this interpolation of a long period of work and study, sandwiched, as it were, between two novitiates, is not due to any peculiarity or discontinuity in Father Doyle's religious development. It is simply the Jesuit life as planned by its Founder. Ignatius was a believer in concentration and specialism; he wanted no amateur dabbling in an impossible amalgam of prayer and mortification with learning and work; so he alternated specialism in holiness with specialism in study. The pursuit of either was to him a serious soul-absorbing business. "Both in letters and in virtue," he says,[3] "one intense act is worth a thousand that are remiss." Having prefixed two years of exclusive concentration on virtue, he decided that study and learning "require the whole man," and hence he prescribed that "during this period not much place should be given to mortifications, prayers and long meditations."[4] "The most

[3] Letter to the Scholastics of Coimbra, 1547: *Epistolae* (*Monumenta Historica S.J.*) 1 (1903) 499.
[4] *Constitutiones S.J., p.* 4, *c.* 4, *n.* 2.

suitable time for mortifications," he says,[5] "is either before giving themselves to studies or after their completion."

This interval was not, however, intended by S. Ignatius to be a spiritual blank. He assumed that, as a result of the spirit of self-application and self-denial acquired in the noviceship, his men could condense a large quantity of intensely real prayer into a small amount of time. "No one would ever make him change his opinion," he said to Father Nadal,[6] "that one hour (of daily prayer) was sufficient for those engaged in study, provided they have mortification and self-denial; for thus they will easily fit more prayer into a quarter of an hour than others who are unmortified into two hours." Ribadeneyra [7] tells us that according to Ignatius "the really mortified man who has conquered his passions finds what he desires in prayer much more easily than he who is unmortified and imperfect; hence our blessed Father esteemed mortification so highly and preferred it to prayer." That is, the spirit of self-denial and self-sacrifice evolved in the noviceship, especially through the medium of the Spiritual Exercises, was reckoned by S. Ignatius to be sufficient, not only to enable the younger members of the Society to devote themselves assiduously to their assigned studies and work, however uncongenial, but also so to purify and facilitate their prayèr that for almost the entire day "the whole man" could be devoted to strenuous intellectual pursuits without spiritual detriment.

But this does not completely express the Ignatian ideal; there is in it a further element which, in view of Fr. Doyle's subsequent development of the presence of God, is particularly interesting. He wished and intended that in a very real sense the lives of his young men should be a continual prayer. "Though study does not allow you time to devote yourselves to very long prayers," he told the Scholastics of Coimbra in 1547, "yet it is possible to meet this desire by turning your work into one continuous prayer, undertaking it solely for the

[5] *Epistolae* 3 (1905) 502.
[6] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 278. Similarly pp. 251, 432, 480.
[7] *Ibid.* p. 471.

service of God." [8] More explicitly still in another letter S. Ignatius portrays his ideal of a Jesuit Scholastic. "Considering the object of their studies," he says, "they cannot have long meditations outside the ordinary exercises of virtue, which are the daily hearing of Mass, one hour given to prayer and examination of conscience, and weekly Confession and Communion. They can exercise themselves in seeking the presence of our Lord in all things—in conversing, in walking, in looking, in tasting, and in listening, in thinking, in everything we do; since it is true that the divine Majesty is in all things by presence, power and essence. And this kind of meditation, which finds God our Lord in all things, is easier than that kind which raises us to more abstract divine things while we laboriously place ourselves in their presence. And, if we dispose ourselves, this good exercise will bring on us great visitations of the Lord though confined to brief prayers. Moreover a Scholastic can exercise himself in frequently offering himself and his studies and labours to God our Lord, reflecting that we accept them for His love and sacrifice our tastes in order to serve His Majesty by helping those for whom He died." [9] "During their works and studies," he says elsewhere,[10] "they can lift their hearts to God; and if they direct everything to the divine service, everything is prayer." For the novice, secluded in his cloister and sheltered from work and responsibility, prayer is comparatively easy and devotion is almost natural. S. Ignatius, who is not training contemplatives, ruthlessly removes him from the hothouse and thrusts him into a college or university. Now comes the testing time; his prayer must become effective,

[8] *Epistolae* 1 (1903) 509; O'Leary, *Letters and Instructions of S. Ignatius Loyola* 1 (1914) 107. What S. Ignatius says of the period of studies includes, of course, that of teaching and prefecting. A Jesuit is a "scholastic" during his whole period of formation from his first to his final vows.

[9] *Epistolae* 3 (1905) 510. In the time of S. Ignatius "the Constitutions do not allow more than one hour's prayer besides Mass, to Scholastics, and in this hour the examinations of conscience and the Office of Our Lady are included." —*Ibid.* 6 (1907) 90. S. Ignatius opposed any extension of this hour.—*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 278, 480. It became a gradual custom, fully operative in the 17th century, to have an hour's mental prayer in addition to the two examinations of conscience.—Brou, *La Spiritualité de S. Ignace,* Paris 1914, p. 22. Undoubtedly, this represents a limitation to S. Ignatius's principle of specialism, which was found in practice to be advisable.

[10] *Epistolae* 6 (1907) 91.

it must twine itself round his work, it must irradiate into the subconscious depths of his being; he must find devotion in the classroom and playground as well as in the cell and chapel. For Ignatius 'desired to see all the members of the Society animated with such a spirit that they do not find less devotion in works of charity and obedience than in prayer and meditation, since they ought to do everything for the love and service of God our Lord." [11]

It is this apostolic fusion of work and prayer which a Jesuit noviceship is designed to produce. The semi-monastic quietness and solitude is not an end in itself; it is merely the stillness of the power-house where unseen, but energy-laden, currents are generated. When Brother Doyle resolved as a novice to begin a "life of slow martyrdom by earnest hard work and constant self-denial," he was not only a true child of St. Ignatius but he was making a resolution destined to be immediately realisable. He who erstwhile had his heart set on the priesthood had to turn aside and devote the fresh energy of his youth to minding thoughtless and unruly youngsters, settling their little squabbles, entering into their petty interests, mending cricket gear, and rehearsing theatricals. Earnest hard work was done in full measure, and has received its human tribute. God's angels alone can estimate the constant self-denial involved. How little can the world's coarse thumb and finger plumb the inner depths of what outwardly is serenity, pleasantness, and ready service! In this period of Willie Doyle's life we can see only the outer expression, later on we shall be privileged to read the record of his soul. It is well to realise now that seemingly natural activities and humdrum duties are based on an inner struggle and a life of faith. It will be well to remember afterwards that an interior life of slow martyrdom does not imply an unnatural or morose exterior.

(3.) PHILOSOPHY, (1898–1901.)

In the ordinary course of events the young Jesuit Scholastic, on emerging from the two years' noviceship, spends one or

[11] *Epistolae* 3 (1905) 502. Cf. *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 520.

two years in the "juniorate" completing his college studies; or, more usually nowadays, he studies for a university degree. After this he pursues a course of philosophy for three years, and only then is he sent to some college to act as master or prefect for some years before he begins his theological studies. In the case of Willie Doyle considerations of health led to a deviation from the usual course. His juniorate had to be interrupted by a long visit to his home in Dalkey, and when sufficiently recovered, he was sent to Clongowes. After he had worked four years there, it was decided that he was sufficiently strong to resume his studies. In 1898 he was sent to Belgium to study philosophy. He joined the exiled French Jesuits of the Champagne Province, who had a house of studies at Enghien, near Brussels. It did not take him long to settle down in his new surroundings. "Here I am," he writes in October, 1898, "just a month in Enghien and six weeks since I left Ireland. Time works wonders they say, and certainly a few weeks have altered this place considerably in my eyes. I feel quite at home; strange manners and customs have lost much of their strangeness; I am beginning to realise that life abroad is not half bad, in fact is rather jolly—granted, of course, that life without tea is worth living! Certainly compared with the strenuous days in Clongowes, existence here is very quiet and peaceful. Take one item. We are all between the blankets by nine o'clock each night; while in Clongowes at that hour I used to settle down to a solid two hours' work, which as often as not ran on to three or four hours. Then there are opportunites here of quiet reading or of quiet prayer that would not be possible in a big boarding-college, so that I am very much a gainer by becoming a philosopher."

"Will you thank J," he wrote to his Father the following Easter, "for the shamrock which arrived fresh and sweet? I had quite an invasion of my room by patriotic Frenchmen seeking a sprig from the old sod. You may be sure the Irishmen decorated themselves lavishly and conspicuously. We made an effort to get the day kept, as far as we were concerned, as a holiday, free of class and full of good things,

but unfortunately *le bon Recteur* could not be brought round to our way of looking at things.

"Speaking of *les Irlandais* reminds me of a funny incident that happened a short time ago. On one of my rambles I noticed a small inn with the sign-board: *Chaumière Irlandaise* (The Irish Cottage). With visions of some exiled Kerry peasant and the possibility of 'a drop of the crathur' we descended on the place. Alas! our visions were rudely dispelled by the good dame who met us; she explained that she had come across the words *Chaumière Irlandaise* in a book, and thinking them as good as any other, had set them up as a sign for thirsty souls. We departed. Next day another party of Irishmen happened to pass the same house and moved, doubtless, by the same motives as ourselves, decided to interview the proprietor. They afterwards confessed they could not make out why the good lady appeared so much surprised at their innocent questions. A week had hardly gone by when the landlady of the *C. I.* was horrified to see three more priests advancing on her inn to ask what connection she had with Ireland. 'What harm have I done?" she asked tearfully. 'Every priest who passes comes in to inquire why I have put up that sign. Only tell me what is wrong with it, and I'll make it right or take the blessed thing away altogether.' The story went the rounds then, and the poor woman has since been left in peace. But I am afraid she must think there is something very wrong with Ireland."

Willie's sense of humour evidently survived a change in climate. But indeed his French class-mates had a spirit akin to his own; at least they availed of the one or two permissible occasions for the perpetration of a joke with a philosophical or theological flavour. The following account was given by a not uninterested spectator.

"We gave our Professor of Philosophy a great reception on his Feast. The class-room was decorated with artistic French taste, and when he entered for his lecture there was a wild scene of enthusiasm. When he was seated verses and

addresses in a dozen languages were read to him, and all his qualities, good, bad and indifferent, were duly honoured. I took charge of the English verses, copies of which may be had cheap—reduction for large quantities.

"Our celebration paled before the splendour of what the solemn theologians prepared for the feast of one of their Professors. He had been lecturing on the Sacraments, and when he entered the lecture-hall on his feast-day, amid the discordant uproar of musical instruments of all descriptions, he was followed by a comical procession. First came a most substantial baby borne by a strapping nurse to receive the waters of Baptism. Then followed the French equivalent of 'Tommy Atkins' to be made a still more perfect soldier by Confirmation. Next arrived a buxom couple (all theologians, mind you) for Matrimony, while the procession was brought up by a corpse, or very nearly a corpse, for Extreme Unction. For this part there had been keen competition, I believe. Assuredly the French are a clever and merry race and knock all the fun possible out of life."

Possibly, Willie Doyle taught them how to knock a little more fun out of life! For it seems that now and then he broke out into some audacious prank which made him the wonder and despair of the good French fathers. But in spite of this lighthearted exterior his health was growing steadily worse; continental life told severely on his constitution. He wrote in June, 1899, to reassure his Mother. "You may set your mind perfectly at rest," he tells her, "I have still some little sense left, and if I thought there was any danger of getting seriously knocked up here, I should have been on my way to Ireland before this. Philosophy may be important, but health is more so. True I have not been very well lately; the 'malady,' to give it a grand name, is nothing new. On and off it has been my companion for the last six years; the only new thing is that it has come at me rather oftener here, as I quite expected. I suffer a good deal from biliousness, and from time to time, whatever goes wrong with the works inside, even a little food gives me cramps. I have seen the doctor, both here and in Dublin, but have little faith in their healing

arts. Apart from this, my health is excellent; so you see there is no cause for uneasiness, since six years' experience has proved that these attacks are only one of the many ills poor flesh is heir to."

His Superiors, however, thought otherwise; so in September he was transferred to Saint Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst, where he pursued his philosophical studies for two years more. Even here bad health continued and made work very hard, but he persevered unflinchingly. Though suffering very much from digestive trouble, he never complained and was always bright and cheerful. His extraordinary good spirits were most remarkable, indeed quite infectious. It was difficult to be out of sorts in the company of one who was known to be suffering, but who nevertheless was full of fun and gaiety. Yet he could be very determined and earnest; and when he took anything in hand, he saw it through to the end, cost what it might.

Among the philosophers at Stonyhurst, Willie was a universal favourite; his simple, unassuming character, his high spirits, above all his readiness to sacrifice himself for others, endeared him to everybody. He was at Stonyhurst during the Boer War when feeling naturally ran high among the different nationalities which formed the community, but though he took a different view from the majority with whom he lived, he never lost the respect and esteem of any, even of those from whom he most differed. Thanks to his playful vivacity he could venture to joke and chaff about matters that touched differences of national sentiment, and by so doing he helped to prevent any sense of strain from creeping into the situation. His love of fun was inexhaustible and led to many amusing incidents. One of the winters he spent at Stonyhurst was very severe and there was much tobogganing. Willie was very anxious to possess a sledge that would be a credit to the Old Country—he was always thoroughly Irish. Accordingly he approached the Father Minister of the house for permission to get the carpenter to finish a toboggan for him. It turned out that the "finishing" meant the making it, Willie's part being to furnish the wood and the idea. When "finished," the "Irish Mail" was the envy of all!

No records survive to tell us of Willie's inner life at this period. Just one letter has been found. It was written to his parents from Stonyhurst on 31st March, 1901, and was evidently treasured up as a precious keepsake consoling to the heart of a Catholic father.

"Ten years ago, to-day, I went to Tullabeg and entered on my career as a novice of the Society. Looking back on it all now, it seems hard to realise that ten long years have gone by since that eventful day on which I took a step which has meant so much for me, and which, thank God, during all this time I have never for a moment regretted. Our Lord was very good to me at that time, smoothing away many difficulties and making that day, which, to human nature at least, was full of sorrow, one of the happiest of all my life.

"I remember well my arrival at Tullabeg and the way I astonished the Father Socius (as he told me afterwards) by running up to the hall door three steps at a time. He was not accustomed, he said, to see novices coming in such a merry mood, evidently enjoying the whole thing; and, though I did not know it then, it was the best of signs of a real vocation.

"Since then I have gone on from day to day and year to year, with the same cheerful spirits, making the best of difficulties and always trying to look at the bright side of things. True, from time to time, there have been trials and hard things to face—even a Jesuit's life is not all roses—but through it all I can honestly say, I have never lost that deep interior peace and contentment which sweetens the bitter things and makes rough paths smooth.

"I think this will be a consolation to you, dearest Father and Mother, for I have often pictured you to myself as wondering if I were really happy and content. I could not be more so, and were I to look upon religious life from the sole aspect of what makes for the greatest happiness, I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the world could offer. Thank God for all His goodness, and after Him, many grateful thanks to you both, dearest Father and Mother, for that good example and loving care to which we all owe so much."

(4.) CLONGOWES AND BELVEDERE, (1901–1904.)

Having completed his course of philosophy, Willie returned to Clongowes in 1901 for another period of prefecting. Here he remained for two years, and he was then transferred to the teaching staff of Belvedere College, Dublin, where he spent a fruitful year of labour. For, as the immediate preparation for the priesthood drew near, zeal for souls that was afterwards to become so strong and ardent, began now to show itself more markedly in his life. He did much good work for the Apostleship of Prayer and for temperance among the boys in Belvedere, with whom he was even more popular than among those he had left behind in Clongowes. The stirring little talks he gave occasionally to his class made an impression which some of his pupils still recall. Especially was he insistent on the spirit of self-sacrifice and on Holy Communion. His attractive character and kindness led many of the boys to give him their confidence and seek help and counsel in their difficulties and doubts; and more than one vocation was discussed and decided at these interviews.

A fellow religious who lived with him during his last years in the colleges, and who was in America at the time of his death, wrote: "I can safely say he was a perfect Jesuit and often reminded me of St. John Berchmans. His was a combination of real solid piety with a truly human character. Bright and joyous himself, he always made others happy and was evidently happy to be able to do so. To those who knew his self-sacrificing devotedness there could be no doubt as to the identity of the heroic Irish Padre the first despatches recording his death spoke of. So certain was I, that I told my friends here that the hero was Fr. Willie. Only three weeks later did I receive corroboration from the Irish papers." Yet later on Willie was to reproach himself for his want of zeal and general tepidity during his years as prefect and master. "I only wish you could see," he once wrote to a dear friend, "how heartily ashamed of myself God makes me by each fresh grace. Perhaps you will realize this better when I tell

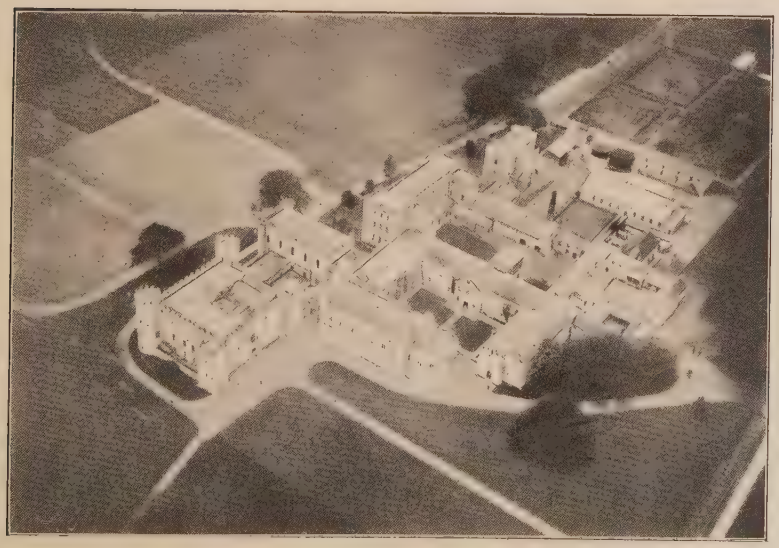
you that at one period of my religious life, before I was a priest, I led a very careless spiritual existence. It began by overwork—of my own making—so that often I was not in bed until three in the morning, with the usual results. I felt at last I was walking near the edge of the precipice, while all the time, though it may sound incredible, God was tugging at my heart for a life of perfection, and I was writing down at each triduum and retreat my determination to become with His grace a saint! Can you understand now why I am so eloquent on the tepid religious? This could not go on. I was driven half mad by the thought of the abuse of grace and the gentle pleading day and night of Jesus. Then in the midst of all this tepidity, when I was praying little, when there was hardly a deliberate act of self-denial in the day, there came an extraordinary grace—one I felt I could not resist—to make the Holy Hour each week. I actually began to do so, though at the time it must have been torture to me, I think. I would not do what God wanted me to do, so He *made* me. I fought against Him like a tiger, but His mercy and patient gentleness won; and I should be a strange ungrateful creature if I did not long now with all my soul to love Him passionately."

We gather from this touching letter of self-revelation that, strenuously active and efficient as he was at his college duties, he felt that "God was tugging at his heart for a life of perfection" and grace was urging him to more than ordinary holiness. Now, too, he began a practice which for the remainder of his life he regarded as a fruitful source of grace and strength: the Holy Hour. Looking back indeed on these years in the light of his maturer experience and spiritual progress as a priest, he bewailed them as years of careless abuse of grace. God grant that many of us may reach even such "tepidity"!

(5.) THEOLOGY, (1904–1907.)

In September, 1904, Willie Doyle went to Milltown Park, Dublin, to begin the study of theology. He now felt the handi-

Father Doyle's Home (Melrose, Dalkey, Co. Dublin).



Clongowes College.

cap of the deficient course of philosophy which his ill-health had necessitated. But he worked hard and courageously, not so much to become a brilliant theologian as to obtain a solid knowledge of all subjects useful to the sacred ministry. While he diligently studied Latin manuals which he must have often found dull and difficult, he was not unmindful of Father de la Colombière's advice to a young theologian: "As to theology, if I had to do it again, I would give twice as much time to meditation as to reading. It is only by meditation that one gets a grip on things and knows the strength and weakness of opinions." [12] Willie Doyle, whose health forbade him to read extensively, strove to digest and assimilate his lectures. He also conscientiously prepared himself for his future work of retreats and missions. The numerous manuscript books which at this time he filled with extracts, spiritual considerations and sermon-plans, serve to show us that it was by diligent drudgery and faithful coöperation that he merited God's blessing on his fruitful subsequent ministry.

He seems at this time to have kept a private spiritual diary, but of this only a few detached leaves remain. One of these is dated 25th November, 1906, and bears the title, "The Practice of Humility":

"I will strive to get a great contempt for myself, to think little of and despise myself, and to pray and desire that others may do the same. I have nothing which God has not given me; I can do nothing without God's grace and help. In a few, very few, years my name will be forgotten. What would people think of me if they knew me as I know myself? My pride and desire for praise; my mean uncharitable thoughts about others; my fear of humiliation; the imperfect way I

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[12] *Lettres Spirituelles*, No. 14, Grenoble, 1902, p. 205. By meditation he means reflection and thought, not mental prayer. Bl. John of Avila said in a discourse to students: "How much more pleased I should be if your knees were hardened with prayer than if your eyes weakened with study."—Longaro degli oddi, *Life of the Blessed Master John of Avila*, Eng. tr., 1898, p. 134. There is a truth, of course, in this emphasis on prayer; but it may be interpreted in a sense contrary to the Jesuit ideal of hard work and diligent study. "In their prayers," say the Constitutions (p. 4, c. 6), "let them often ask for the grace to advance in learning; let them resolve to apply their minds seriously and constantly to their studies."

have lived in the Society; the sins I have committed, the scandal given, the terrible harm done to others by making them tepid, breaking rules etc.; my resolutions broken in an hour; the many faults not corrected after sixteen years of religious life. In spite of all this I deceive myself that I am pleasing God. . . ."

Another undated sheet is headed. "What must I do to become a saint?"

"(1) Excite in myself an ardent desire and *determination* to become one, cost what it may.

(2) Beg and pray without ceasing for this grace and the desire of holiness.

(3) Take each action and duty as if it were the last and the only one of my life, and perform it with extraordinary fervour.

(4) Have a fixed duty for each moment and not depart from it; never waste a moment.

(5) The spirit of constant prayer.

(6) Relentless war against my will and inclination; *agere contra* at every moment in all things.

(7) The faithful practice of little mortifications."

On 7th June, 1907, he noted down the following resolution:

"While making the Holy Hour to-day, the Feast of the Sacred Heart, I felt inspired to make this resolution: Sweet Jesus, as a first step towards my becoming a Saint, which you desire so much, I will try to do each duty, each little action, as perfectly and fervently as I possibly can. St. John Berchmans, help me."

It will be observed how severely practical these resolutions are. He, who in after life felt called upon to perform heroic austerities, here in his student days, is true to the Ignatian ideal of intense application and prayerful work, "as a first step towards his becoming a saint." It is the most difficult step. Fr. Doyle certainly did not find the routine and study of a theologian's life easy or congenial. He tells us so in a letter which he wrote to his sister in June, 1907:

"I can scarcely believe I have all the long years of study, which I used to dread so much, really over. You know I

was never intended by Almighty God to keep my nose buried in books all day. Climbing up chimneys or walking on my head across the roof of a house is more in my line! When I came here, three years ago, my health was anything but good, and kind friends said I would not spend six weeks at theology. But after the first Christmas things began to improve and, thank God, have gone on improving steadily ever since, so that now in spite of the hard work—and it has been hard and trying—I am in far better health and able to do more than when I came here. I look upon this as a great grace from God, and I only hope I shall not prove ungrateful to Him for all He has done."

He constantly asked his "missionary" sister for her prayers. This is how he humorously puts the request in a letter written at Easter, 1905:

"You will rejoice to hear I am starting a new devotion called 'the fifty-two Saturdays.' Its conditions are very simple. You get as many good souls as possible to join you. Next a deserving object of charity is chosen—the founder of this devotion modestly suggests himself. Then tuck up your habit, that it may not get worn out, and on your knees pray as hard as you can and as long as you can for the spiritual improvement or happy death of the said individual. If this is kept up for fifty years there is certain hope of better things."

In a letter written to her a month before his ordination he tells her how eagerly yet tremulously he is looking forward to the great consummation:

"As you may imagine, all my thoughts at present are centred on the Great Day, July 28th. The various events of the year have helped to keep it before my mind, learning to say Mass, the Divine Office etc.; but now that such a short time remains, I find it hard to realise that I shall be a priest so very soon. Were it not for all the good prayers, especially yours, sister mine, which are being offered up daily for me, I should almost feel in despair, because these long years of waiting (nearly seventeen now) have only brought home to me how unworthy I am of such an honour and such dignity."

Willie Doyle was ordained priest on 28th July, 1907. Shortly after the ceremony he wrote to the sister to whom he owed so much:

"I know that you will be glad to receive a few lines from the hands which a few hours ago have been consecrated with the holy oil. Thank God a thousand, thousand times, I can say at long last, I am a priest, even though I be so unworthy of all that holy name implies. How can I tell you all that my heart feels at this moment? It is full to overflowing with joy and peace and gratitude to the good God for all that He has done for me, and with heartfelt thankfulness to the dear old Missionary for all her prayers. . . . I say my first Mass to-morrow at nine at Hampton for the dear Parents, the second (also at nine) at Terenure will be for you. . . . Thank you for all you have done for me; but above all thank the dear Sacred Heart for this crowning grace imparted to your little brother who loves you so dearly."

Of his inner feelings we have just one little private record: "My loving Jesus, on this the morning of my Ordination to the Priesthood, I wish to place in Your Sacred Heart, in gratitude for all You have done for me, the resolution from this day forward *to go straight for Holiness*. My earnest wish and firm resolve is to strive with might and main to become a Saint."

(6.) SOME NOTES WRITTEN DURING THEOLOGY

Among the notes which Fr. Doyle recorded during his theology, there are many which have a personal touch and embody his own ideals and aspirations. Some of them will be here quoted in order to help us to understand his ideas of holiness. He who was soon to be perhaps imprudent himself, at least made no mistake as to what constituted true sanctity.

"How many deceive themselves," he wrote, "in thinking sanctity consists in the 'holy follies' of the saints! How many look upon holiness as something beyond their reach

or capability, and think that it is to be found only in the performance of extraordinary actions. Satisfied that they have not the strength for great austerities, the time for much prayer, or the courage for painful humiliations, they silence their conscience with the thought that great sanctity is not for them, that they have not been called to be saints. With their eyes fixed on the heroic deeds of the few, they miss the daily little sacrifices God asks them to make; and while waiting for something great to prove their love, they lose the countless little opportunities of sanctification each day bears with it in his bosom." (Sept., 1905.)

Again he writes to the same effect.

"What is it to be a saint? Does it mean that we must macerate this flesh of ours with cruel austerities, such as we read of in the life-story of some of God's great heroes? Does it mean the bloody scourge, the painful vigil and sleepless night, that crucifying of the flesh in even its most innocent enjoyment? No, no, the hand of God does not lead us all by that stern path of awful heroism to our reward above. He does not ask from all of us the holy thirst for suffering in its highest form, of a Teresa or a Catherine of Siena. But sweetly and gently would He lead us along the way of holiness by our constant unswerving faithfulness to our duty, duty accepted, duty done for His dear sake. How many alas! who might be saints are now leading lives of indifferent virtue, because they have deluded themselves with the thought that they have no strength to bear the 'holy follies' of the saints. How many a fair flower of innocence, which God had destined to bloom in dazzling holiness, has faded and withered beneath the chill blast of a fear of suffering never asked from it." (April, 1905.)

Words such as these, coming from the pen of one who was not unfamiliar with scourge and vigil and fast, are helpful and consoling. Not that they picture the path of holiness as other than the royal road of the cross. Fr. Doyle wished rather to remove the mirage of an unreal and impossible cross from the way of those of us whose true holiness is to be found in meeting the daily and hourly little crosses, hu-

manly inglorious perhaps, but divinely destined for our sanctification. In the lives of canonised saints, and of him whose life we are recording, there are doubtless "holy follies" and grace-inspired imprudences. But these are not the essence of sanctity; they are its bloom, whereas its stem is self-conquest. Without these there can be great holiness—no terrifying penances marked the life of St. John Berchmans or of that winsome fragile nun who is known as the Little Flower. But without the slow secret mortification of doing ordinary and mostly trivial duties well, there can be no spiritual advance. Heroism is not a sudden romantic achievement; it is the fruit of years of humdrum faithfulness. This is not only the lesson of Fr. Doyle's heroic life and death, it is the idea which here at the outset of his apostolic career he clearly fixed for himself. His favourite motto was St. Ignatius's phrase, *agere contra:* Act against yourself. Into these two words there is condensed the essence of practical and delusion-proof holiness. Act, not merely think or feel; not against outer or imaginary enemies but against our lower selves. "How much is comprised in the little words *agere contra!* Therein is the real secret of sanctity, the hidden source from which the saints have drunk deep of the love of God and reached that height of glory they now enjoy." (Oct., 1905.)

Again he records his view of heroism, which always had an attraction for his chivalrous, impulsive, generous nature.

"Heroism," he says, "is a virtue which has an attraction for every heart. It seems to lift us out of our petty selves and make us for a moment forget our own selfish interests. It appeals irresistibly to the noble-minded; to the cowardly even, it is a powerful stimulus. Thus it is that in all times the saints have ever had such an attraction for men—they are heroes! In their secret hidden lives of prayer and penance men saw a heroism which was not the one sharp pang of a fearless deed, leaving their names to history as a nation's pride, but a nobler heroism of a life of countless noble deeds, unknown perhaps to man; by God alone were their secret victories seen." (Nov., 1905.)

A few months later he wrote out a short sermon on Heroism,

taking as his text *St. John* x. 11.: "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep."

"And you, (he cries), wives and bread-winners, have you no task within the fold, no little flock to tend and guard? Has not God committed to your care the innocent lambs, the little ones of your household? Within the pasture of your own family are you the good shepherd, or the thief and the hireling? . . . Jesus does not ask from His shepherds now the shedding of their life-blood. But He does ask from them a death more hard, more lingering, a life-long death of sacrifice for His flock. . . . the daily crucifying of every evil passion, the stamping out of sloth, of anger, of drunkenness, the constant striving after the holiness of your state of life. . . . Look upon the great Christ, the Good Shepherd, hanging on the Cross. He is our model, our hero. Gaze well upon His bleeding wounds, His mangled limbs, that sad agony-stricken face. Look well, and pray with generous heart that he may make you in word and deed heroes in His service." (April, 1906.)

The final phase of Fr. Doyle's life has been so often described as heroic by those who were well fitted to estimate heroic service in a human cause, that these few thoughts on heroism written many years before, must have for us not only a biographical interest, but an earnest impressiveness. They were not only written, they were lived.

On the feast of S. Teresa (15th October), 1905, he penned some lines which seem like a prevision of that call to heroic generosity which was so soon to come to the writer. "The life of S. Teresa," he writes, "teaches us that we should never despair of becoming saints. As a child she was filled with a strange mysterious longing for martyrdom; yet the early years of her religious life found her cold and tepid in the service of God, indifferent to the sacred duties of her state. The call came; sweetly in her ear sounded that little voice which too often in other souls has been hushed and stifled. Teresa rose; the past was gone and no lamenting could recall its ill-spent days, but the present moment was still for her, the future lay before her. Ungenerous in the past, generosity would be

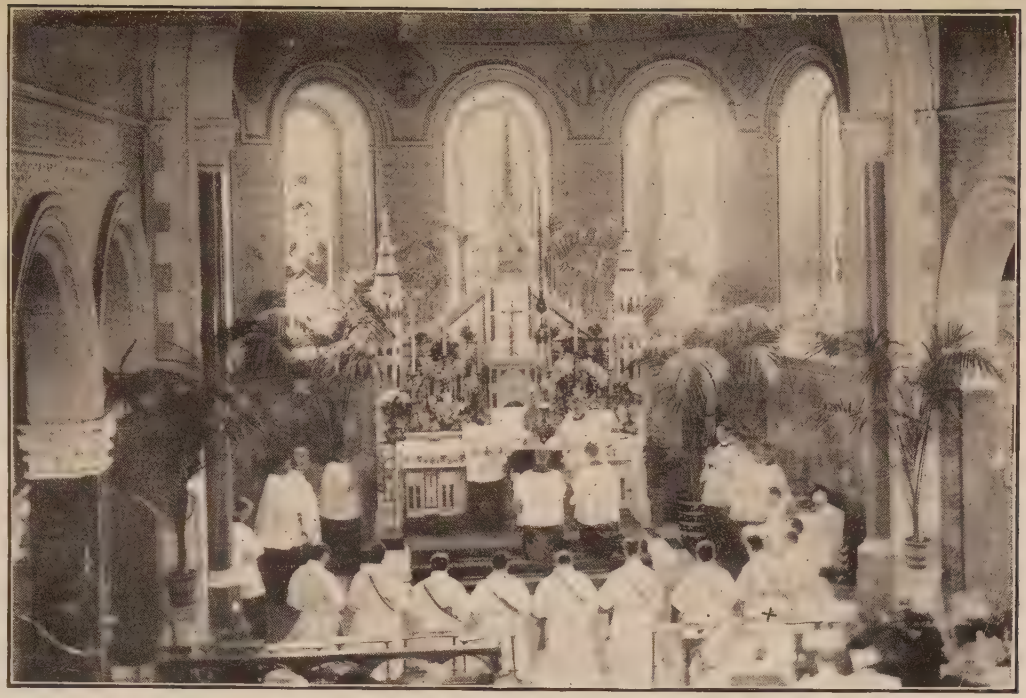
her darling virtue; cold and careless, no one would equal now her burning love of her patient outraged Saviour."

Another note describes the thoughts of a soul just entering heaven:

"Heaven at long last! Peace and rest for ever! Sin is gone and sorrow is gone, suffering and pain are past for ever. Joy and gladness is my reward now and on, on for ever into the immeasurable depths of a blessed eternity. How mean and contemptible the miserable pleasures of my earthly life seem now! How could I have been so deluded as even for an instant to think of bartering this unexplored paradise of delights for some momentary gratification of the flesh. And my penances and mortification which cost me so much, from which I so often cowardly shrank, how glorious they seem to me now, how, beyond all measure, generously rewarded. Regret? It cannot find a place in this home of bliss; but if it could, surely would I grieve that I have done so little for Jesus in return for what I now enjoy." (March, 1905.)

"I have done so little for Jesus," was a thought often expressed by Fr. Doyle, especially as he neared his end. And, mingled with this regret of a generous soul, was the joyful gratitude to God for the grace of the cross. Prophetically he describes his own final thoughts in this little sketch of St. Francis Xavier's death.

"Xavier's hour has come, the hour of his eternal reward and never-ending bliss. In a little hut, open on all sides to the biting blast, the great Apostle lies dying. Far from home and all that makes this life pleasant, far from the quiet of his own religious house, alone upon this barren isle, our Saint will yield his soul to God. What joy fills his heart now at the thought of the sacrifices he has made, the honours he has despised, the pleasures left behind. Happy sufferings! Happy penances! He thinks of what his life might have been, the life of a gay worldling, and in gratitude he lifts his eyes to thank his God for the graces given him. What matter now the hardships he has endured? All, all, are past, for now the sweet reward of heaven is inviting him to his eternal rest." (3 Dec., 1905.)



Ordination, Milltown Park, 28th July, 1907.
(Father Doyle is marked X.)

As we read of this death-scene of the great Jesuit apostle, unsheltered and unhelped, in his wind-swept hut on San-Cian, our thoughts inevitably pass to another Jesuit missioner's death on the shell-swept ridge of Frezenberg. Thus, too, he faced his eternal rest.

Chapter III

TERTIANSHIP (1907–1908.)

TWO years in the novitiate, seven years in the colleges, three years at philosophy, three years at theology [1]—it is a long professional course. But it is not yet completed. St. Ignatius did not consider the Jesuit fully formed until, in addition to the two years' noviceship, he has undergone a third year of probation, or a tertianship, as it is called. "Having completed the diligent task of cultivating the intellect," the Constitutions tell us,[2] "those who have been engaged in studies, must, during the time of the last probation, more diligently exercise themselves in the school of the heart and devote themselves to spiritual and corporal things which help towards progress in humility and in the abnegation of all sensual love as well as of their own will and judgment and also towards a greater knowledge and love of God; so that, having progressed in themselves, they may better help others towards spiritual progress for the glory of God our Lord."

St. Ignatius wanted men who would be learned as well as holy, educators as well as missioners, able to face the syllogism or the scaffold, at home in a wigwam or in a university. Holding—probably as a result of his own experience [3]—that serious and constant study, such as he required from his Scholastics, was incompatible with prolonged prayer and mortification, he prescribed that "all hindrances to study should be removed, both devotions and mortifications undertaken in excess or without due order as well as external occupations;

[1] Now four years for all.

[2] *Constitutiones S.J.*, p. 5, c. 2, n. 1.

[3] While at his studies in Barcelona and Paris he had to conquer his spiritual lights and consolations by making a vow or promise of diligent study and attendance at lectures.—*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 68, 85.

. . . all such exercises, however pious, must be deferred till the studies have been completed." [4] Ignatius took for granted that such thorough devotion to study and teaching made men one-sided and dried up the springs of spiritual chivalry. So he decided that his course of training would end where it had begun—in the novitiate. The tertianship is the noviceship over again; once more the spiritual exercises are undertaken for an entire month. Yet there is a difference, for after years of study and discipline, the raw schoolboy has developed into a mature religious and has been ordained priest. The tertianship is the last training-period of a Jesuit, often it is his last chance of quiet leisure and spiritual reflection. Hence for many it is a turning-point in life; it sheds a new light on the past hurried years seen now in critical retrospect, it creates energy and reawakens ideals which permanently influence the future. So, at least, it was for Willie Doyle.

In October, 1907, he went to Tronchiennes, near Ghent, to make his tertianship. For business reasons his route to Belgium was through Paris. This gave him the opportunity of making several excursions of devotion, some details of which survive in an account which he sent home. A kind friend had provided him with his fare second class to Paray-le-Monial, the home of Saint Margaret Mary. By travelling third class he was able to go to Lyons and thus visit Ars, to whose saintly Curé, Blessed John Vianney, he had a special devotion. At Paray the Jesuit Fathers were living scattered in twos or threes about the town. He found his way to a poor little house where he was welcomed by an old, almost blind, French Jesuit who was just sitting down to supper when he arrived. "A laybrother put before me," he wrote, "what I thought was a rather large bowl of soup for one; but nothing daunted I was starting to demolish the lot when the brother whispered in alarm: "Oh, mon père, c'est pour tous!" [5] Here at Paray Fr. Doyle had the happiness of saying Mass at the very altar where our Lord appeared so often to Saint Margaret Mary. In spite of missing a train, and after an adventurous journey on a very

[4] *Constitutiones S.J.*, p. 4, c. 6, n. 3.
[5] "Oh, Father, that's for *all* of you!"

primitive steam-tram, he found himself in the spot hallowed by the Curé of Ars. Fr. Doyle insisted on seeing everything—the room in which the saint died, the half-burnt curtains said to have been damaged by the devil, the little pan in which the holy man cooked the flour-lumps which he called cakes. He was allowed as a special privilege to sit in the Curé's confessional, and above all he was able to say Mass at his shrine, using the saint's chalice. Just above the altar reposed the Curé's body in a case of glass and gold. "It gave one a strange feeling," wrote Fr. Doyle, "to see the holy old man lying before one during Mass, calm and peaceful, with a heavenly smile on his face; just as he died fifty years ago." "I shall never forget my visit to Ars," he concluded; "I knew all about the Blessed Curé's life, so that each spot had an interest and charm for me."

After this Fr. Doyle spent two days in Lyons, saying Mass twice at the shrine of our Lady of Fourvières. Then back to Paris where during an interval of business he paid a visit to what was once the Jesuit house in the Rue de Sèvres. "All the Fathers are gone," he wrote, "and now in each room of the huge house a family is living, for it has been let by the Government as a tenement house, whilst the beautiful church has been turned into a cinema hall. In another street where we had a large college, a stage has been erected on the very altar; and where people once heard Mass, they now listen to music-hall songs. A stirring contrast to this is the perpetual adoration at Montmartre—bands of women pray all day and men watch at night."

Fr. Doyle's little trip was soon over and he arrived in Tronchiennes a few days before the opening of the Long Retreat (the Spiritual Exercises for thirty days), which, with three "repose days" lasted from 10th October till 13th November. In a letter written to his Father next day he describes with his usual humour the Retreat and his life as a tertian:

"Lazarus is risen! But by mistake they left him in the tomb thirty-three instead of the scriptural three days; and poor Lazarus is jolly glad to get out and breathe again! We came out of retreat yesterday, having commenced on the

afternoon of Oct. 9th. After each eighth day we were given a walk in the afternoon for some hours, but with the retreat order of time in the morning and evening. These three days, however, did not count as part of the thirty days' retreat. I have nearly forgotten how to talk or write to you so you must excuse all mistakes. As I wrote to Fr. Charles, I have been simply amazed at the good form I have been in all during this trying time, and now at the end I am wonderfully fresh and fit. Many of the Fathers were not able to go through all the exercises; but I missed nothing, not even the hour's meditation at midnight. That is perhaps the worst thing in the whole retreat. You go to bed as usual at nine, and then just as you are in the middle of your best dream, a wretch, a perfect villain you think him, puts his head into your room just as all the clocks of Ghent are booming twelve and says: *Benedicamus Domino* (Let us bless the Lord). By all means, you say, but would it not do to bless Him between the blankets? The Psalmist says, Let them rejoice in their beds! You feel it is rather too much of a good joke, but you remark this pleasure only comes once in a lifetime; and so you tumble out on the cold floor (my carpet must have gone off for spring cleaning) and jump into your togs as quickly as you can, for the midnight air of Belgium has a sting in it. However the hour passes quickly, and then one dive for the blanket, though I felt much more inclined for breakfast. Four o'clock came round very quickly—I really think there is something amiss with the clocks here. But in spite of it all and the undoubted strain of the continued retreat, I do not feel one bit the worse and I feel a good deal better in the spiritual life.

"The truth is, Tronchiennes agrees with me and the food I find excellent. I was a bit afraid of this, as one fortnight in Enghien long ago knocked me out of tune completely. It is rather hard work getting accustomed to a second dinner at seven, having dined at twelve; but 'I does my endeavours,' and I think I succeed. I now weigh—no, I won't put it on paper, it looks too terrible when worked out in kilos. It is nice to say 'I am nine stone,' but if you say you weigh two or three hundred kilos, people get a bit alarmed.

"As you may imagine, life here is not very exciting. My chief amusement is listening to the bells of this house or I should rather say houses, for it is a second Maynooth, huge in size. There is a special bell for the Lay Brothers and one for the Lay Brother Novices; another for the Noviceship, and a fourth for the Juniors. We have our own bell and there is a large bell for the whole house; a bell to call Fathers who are wanted in the parlour, a brazen-tongued beast of a bell at the hall door, and to crown all, the church steeple which was formerly a part of this old abbey of Premonstratensian monks has a chime all of its own. May the Lord be good and send a thunder storm somewhere near that chime that we might have a little peace! . . .

"I have been very fortunate in getting a room facing south, so that I have the sun all day. My window looks down on the river which flows past the house; and I am able to study Belgian country life and inhale Belgian country smells from a couple of farms just opposite. The grounds around are very large, with pretty walks; one especially along the bank of the river is a great favourite of mine."

Writing a little later he drops the veil of humour and gives his correspondent a glimpse into his inner thoughts:

"I shall not try to describe the Long Retreat, as we call our thirty days' retreat. It is a wonderful time and leaves an impression on me such as no number of eight days' retreats could do. There is no doubt that it is a trying time, though I found it much easier than I expected. But the thought that this is the Great Retreat, the harvest time of graces, helps one wonderfully. The thirty days' retreat is indeed a great privilege, yet the year we are given here is even a greater favour. St. Ignatius intended that, after devoting fifteen or sixteen years to acquiring all the knowledge possible, this year of tertianship should be devoted wholly to the study of perfection; hence practically the entire day is given to spiritual things. Are we not fortunate in having such an opportunity of doing something for our souls and acquiring a store of grace for the battle which is to come?"

During the tertianship it is customary to allow the young

priests to try their 'prentice hand at some missionary work. Fr. Doyle helped in giving missions in Aberdeen and Yarmouth during the Lent of 1908.[6] In his first experience as a missioner he was fortunate to have the advice and coöperation of Fr. Matthew Power, S.J., who formed a high opinion of his younger colleague. This he expressed in a letter written after Fr. Doyle's death. "Young and inexperienced at the start of our great mission some years ago," writes Fr. Power, "he proved conclusively to me, his senior, and to all the local clergy and people, that he was a Jesuit missioner 'to the manner born,' and this from the very first sermon he preached. Every day he grew in the affection of the Aberdonians until we parted to his great grief and mine."

"I was rather uneasy on my way to Scotland," wrote Fr. Doyle to his Father, "as it was the first mission ever given by Jesuits in the 'granite city,' and naturally we hoped it would be successful. Then, though I was very glad to work under such a great man as Fr. Matthew Power, who is nearly as famous in Scotland as Fr. Tom Burke was in Ireland, I could not help feeling that I should play only a very humble second fiddle beside him. Fr. Power is a tiny creature of only 6 ft. 6 ins. and 18 stone weight, but his heart is as big as himself and from the start he gave me every encouragement and we soon became great friends. I have been most fortunate to begin my missionary career under such a master; for Fr. Power has had a vast and varied experience and I learnt very much from him, and I hope to profit by his advice and hints. My three weeks' training will stand to me in the future and will be simply invaluable in time to come. Fr. Power's personality and name were bound to draw the people, and I was happy also at the thought that so many good prayers were being offered for the success of the mission. It has been, thank God, an unqualified success.

"We succeeded in getting the people to take up daily Communion, over a hundred go every morning now, though there were practically none when we came. In many other ways

[6] In January, 1908, he gave his first retreat to some fifty girls in a convent at Hamont, near Antwerp.

much and lasting good has been done and the people have got a lift which they wanted badly, for though very good at heart, there is far too much coldness and indifference amongst them.

"Even the old Bishop [7]—a typical Scot—caught the general enthusiasm; and after a very complimentary speech on Sunday invited us to come back next year (probably Advent) and give a renewal of the mission. As you may imagine, the work has been hard. We found it necessary to change the original programme and add to the services. This meant I had to speak on a large number of subjects for which I was quite unprepared and often I had to preach after a few moments hasty thought, but certainly the grace of God was in abundance. I was not the least bit nervous and never at a loss for plenty to say. Though the church is very large and lofty I was easily able to make myself heard in every part of it.

"Sunday was a busy day. This was the programme. I said Mass at 8 and gave Holy Communion which nearly filled the time till 9. Then Children's Mass which I heard with them explaining the various parts of the Mass as we went along. A rush for breakfast followed by a sermon at 11, the Cathedral being as well filled as at night, the Scotch love sermons I am told. At 3 o'clock instructions for children. At 3.30 Fr. Power began a controversial lecture for non-Catholics, which proved a great success and is to be continued by the Bishop. At 6 I gave a double instruction, a quarter of an hour on the Creed, another quarter on one of the Commandments, Fr. Power following with the sermon. Four talks in one day I found quite enough to satisfy my zeal. I got a slight cold and quite lost my voice on the fifth day, but was able to resume on the day following. Besides the Children's Mass and evening instruction we had every day a sermon in the morning, a double instruction and sermon in the evening, dividing the honours of the pulpit between us. I was rather tired at the end, but feel fit and keen to open at Great Yarmouth, St. Mary's Church, on Sunday.

"There are many things, funny and consoling, which I

[7] Dr. Chisholm, who died in 1918.

could tell you about the mission. One lady, who wanted me to sanction a very shady proceeding, bluntly expressed her great annoyance: 'Really, Father, this is very disappointing, I was looking forward to this Mission for I thought that Jesuits were *men of the world!*' What she intended to say was she thought they had no consciences. On the last evening another lady came and said, 'Father, I want to thank you for the great happiness you have brought to one home in Aberdeen. My daughter has been in great trouble for a long time and for years has longed for someone to whom she could open her heart. You cannot imagine the joy in that house tonight, and I promise you a grateful mother's prayers as long as I live.'

"I got to like the people very much; they are not effusive, but genuine and sincere, and I felt really sorry at leaving them. At the close of the mission quite a large number came to wish us good-bye and to thank us for the mission. The 'holy missioners' have been photographed in various positions, to be sold for the benefit of the church. I shall send you copies when they come. I have never met anywhere such kindness as from the Administrator, Fr. Meany, and his curates. They made us quite at home from the start and did everything to help us and make the mission a success."

Fr. Power having written to give him a "good character," Fr. Doyle was invited to give a second mission in Yarmouth, which he also described in a letter written to his Father on the 20th April, 1908:

"The mission closed last night with a grand flourish of trumpets, renewal of vows, and general scorching of the Old Boy's tail, not to speak of one lady's hat, who, when I told all to raise their lighted candles, calmly thrust hers into the middle of a flower garden which she carried on her head. She was gallantly rescued from the destruction by a young officer behind her; perhaps that encounter may have a happy ending. Naturally speaking, I am very glad the week is over. The physical effort of speaking every night for well over an hour is a big one, and then there was the responsibility and strain of having everything on my own shoulders. Super-

naturally I am sorry not to have another week, for now that I have 'got' the people much good might be done. However I have no reason to complain for God's grace and the effect of all your good prayers have been evident during the course of the mission. Though I cannot say I am quite satisfied—perhaps I expected too much—the Fathers here are more than pleased, thank God, and the people tell me the Yarmouth Catholics surpassed themselves.

"I certainly started under great disadvantages. . . . The mission was only announced the preceding Sunday for the first time, no posters put up and no hand bills sent round. In Ireland people come to a mission without the asking, over here they must be dragged; hence the preparation by the local clergy visiting and inviting the people is looked upon as more important than the sermons of the mission. All this work was neglected, and even at the end of the week I came across families who did not even know a mission was going on. In spite of that, the church was well filled, especially towards the end, for I made the people go round and hunt up their friends, each lady having to bring 'six men in tow each night.'" "Any lady," declared Fr. Doyle at the opening sermon, "any lady who turns up here to-morrow evening without at least one gentleman in tow, will be refused admission!" On returning to the sacristy after Benediction he found two maiden sisters of uncertain age waiting for him. "Father," they said, "we liked your sermon very much; we are so sorry we are to lose the rest, for we have no gentlemen friends and so cannot bring any to the mission." Needless to say, they were promptly dispensed!

"I was told," he continues, "that the Yarmouth people had very little faith, were very cold and must be taken very quietly; a thing I was quite determined not to do, and with the happiest results, for a bit of Celtic fire and dash was quite refreshing to them after the solemn sermons they are accustomed to in England generally. More than one told me that was just what they wanted, and they proved themselves only too willing to respond. One little thing was gratifying. On the first morning only three people came to Mass; this morning the

church was well filled though the mission is over and there were several rails for Holy Communion, which they have promised to keep up.

"I have got so hardened about blowing my own trumpet that I make no excuse for doing so again. I was greeted on Friday evening by two ladies from London staying here, with 'Father, we have heard Fr. Bernard Vaughan preaching twice on the Passion, but we both prefer your sermon to-night.' Do you live near the Blarney Stone? said I to myself. I was told that another Protestant dame, who had been attending the mission, refused to come at the end because she said, 'I do not want to become a Catholic.' When I was offered this work in Aberdeen I was very much inclined to refuse it. I was rather afraid of facing the music alone, and besides tired after my three weeks' work. I cannot say how glad I feel now that I came; it has been a splendid experience for me, and simply invaluable. I was certainly much more at home and preached better than in Scotland.

"I had a strange experience which seemed providential. In my wanderings through the slums I came across by accident an old woman over ninety who had not entered a church for long, long years. 'I have led a wicked life,' she said, 'but every day I asked God to send me a good friend before I died and I feel now my prayer is heard.' The next day I came back and heard her Confession, and brought her Holy Communion on Easter Sunday. As the tears streamed down her old withered face she said, 'Oh, Father, this is the first happy day of my life, for I have never known what happiness is since I was a child.' I could not help feeling that the opening of heaven to that poor sinner was a reward more than enough for all the long years of preparation now passed."

Early in May Fr. Doyle was back again in Tronchiennes where the even tenor of his life was uninterrupted until early in July when he undertook a pilgrimage, which is worth recording for its amusing incidents and for the sidelights it throws on his character. The account may be prefaced by some remarks sent by his fellow-pilgrim. "I was in philosophy with Fr. Willie at Stonyhurst," says Fr. Stanislaus Roberts, "after

which I did not see him till we met again at Tronchiennes. Were anyone to ask me what was striking about him, I would answer: the absence, to the outward eye, of anything remarkable. He showed a healthy keenness on anything that called for his attention; he was always bright and had that heaven-sent gift which we call a sense of humour. Somehow or other we did not seem to come across one another much at Tronchiennes, even though living in the same house; which would appear to prove that there was nothing special to arrest the attention of the casual observer." A significant appreciation which we shall do well to bear in mind when we come to examine Fr. Doyle's interior life.

The pilgrimage, which in the good old days, before the invention of laws against mendicancy and vagrancy, was a rather serious "experiment" for both novices and tertians, had practically ceased to exist in Tronchiennes. Occasionally some members of the English Province were allowed to visit the shrine of Our Lady of Chèvremont, near Liège, about a hundred miles away. Failing to find a volunteer from his own Province, Fr. Roberts, as he says himself, "approached Fr. Willie, and, like the sport he was, he agreed at once." "Fr. Willie,' he continues, "was a most pleasant companion ready to fall in with any reasonable scheme and never at a loss for timely suggestions." "We got on capitally together," wrote Fr. Doyle, "though the Belgians we met seemed much amused at two 'deadly enemies' tramping along side by side."

FATHER DOYLE'S PILGRIMAGE

The luggage of each pilgrim consisted, according to Fr. Doyle of a "night-shirt, a pair of socks, a razor, an extra trouser-button, and the grace of God." The month of July is not exactly adapted for a walking tour through Belgium, especially if one is wearing a heavy black soutane buttoned down to the feet. So, between the weather and some occasional rebuffs, the pilgrimage had a penitential aspect. The pilgrims were furnished with a letter of credentials, a long Latin screed which provided one or two diversions when it was played as a trump card on reluctant nuns not strong in Latin. They also had a purse of money to save their faces in case the arm of the law apprehended them as beggars and vagabonds; but this was merely an emergency reserve. "We had to depend on our sturdy legs to find us a bed for the night," says Fr. Doyle, "and on our eloquent tongues for food and drink. In the French-speaking parts this was not so difficult; but in the Flemish districts our vocabulary was sorely taxed. However we found this phrase very useful and expressive, 'Waar is het grubben?'—which sounds very much like, 'Where is the grub?' That, with a little pantomime saved us at least from starvation." In asking the way, when French failed, they had ready such tags as "Waar is de weg voor . . .?" or "Waar is het . . . ?"—which they boldly fired off, and generally got there.

They left Tronchiennes at 6.45 A. M. on Tuesday, 7th July, 1908. Passing through Ghent, they arrived at Alost at 12.45. They received a hearty welcome at the Jesuit College—the only Belgian College belonging to the "old" Society prior to its suppression which was given back to the Society on its Restoration. Having tested the shower baths and refreshed the inner man, they decided not to travel any more that day.

Next morning, Wednesday, they were early afoot on the road to Brussels. At Assche they were hospitably entertained by the Sisters of Charity who advised them to make a detour to Jette and to call at the Sacred Heart Convent there. They were received royally by the Reverend Mother, who showed them where the body of the Foundress, B. Sophie

Barat, was reposing; it had been brought from France only a day or so before. A long trudge over the pavement of Brussels, from end to end of the city, brought them to the Jesuit College of Saint Michel on the Boulevard Militaire at 5.45 P. M. They tumbled immediately into the fine open-air swimming bath.

Tired of the long straight *chaussées* they determined on a detour. Leaving Brussels at 8.30 on Thursday morning, they started for Louvain via Forêt de Soignes, Groenandal and Overyssche. The Forest of Soignes was, says Fr. Doyle, "the most beautiful bit of scenery I have seen in Belgium." "Four hours' march," he continues, "brought us to the other side of the forest very hungry. A convent loomed in the distance. 'The Black Sisters' the people called them, and black they were in name and heart! 'No pilgrim fathers wanted to-day, thanks,' was all the welcome we got; so we retired as gracefully as we could. When we last saw that convent it was still standing; but I am sure by this it is a heap of ruins, covering the remains of the wretched Black Sisters. Our next attempt was amusing. We saw a fine building on a hill and were told the Brothers lived there. Hunger lends wings to the feet and soon that hill was scaled. We rang; a dream of a maid, gorgeous in all the splendour of her noble calling, opened the door: rather a surprise in a holy religious house. 'Were the Brothers at home?' A smile. 'They are never at home—away at Brussels enjoying themselves,' was the answer. Rather mystifying; but everything was explained when we learned later in the day that the occupants of that magnificent pile were three old bachelors, brothers! The poor pilgrim took in several reefs in his belt and plunged down the hill in search of the Curé's house. The good Fathers held up their hands in horror when they heard what we proposed to do. 'Ah! les Anglais!' that explains all; the English are all a bit mad, you know. With the inner man well fortified we faced the road for Louvain; afternoon coffee in a friendly convent where the ubiquitous Irish nuns and Irish girls, whom we found in every religious house, came in to see us." They arrived in Louvain at 8 P. M.

Once again their destination was at the other end of the town, and they had to face a long stretch of *pavé* before reaching the Jesuit College.

At eight o'clock on Friday morning they left Louvain and late that evening they arrived in Landen, which Fr. Roberts noted as the birthplace of S. Gertrude and which Fr. Doyle noted as "ever famous for the death of the great Sarsfield."

"As I walked across the battlefield," continues Fr. Doyle, "his dying words came back to me: 'Would that this were for Ireland!'[8] Sarsfield left his blood to moisten the plain of Landen, while the big drops of perspiration which rolled from our faces will certainly raise a record crop of wheat. To our dismay the Curé was away from home. At the convent we were told we would find rooms. Alas! they were all in the hands of the painter, so the good Mother said; but it was evident the nuns were afraid of us. We had a hearty meal, however, of bread and cheese washed down with cooling water. I could have eaten a haystack, for we were both famished. On the road again. Here was a fix. Nearly nine, no bed and almost all our Office to say. However the Lord was good and we found an old priest who gave us two rooms for the night."

"Up with the lark next morning," says Fr. Doyle, "for we had our 26 miles to cover in order to reach Liège in the evening. Old Sol was up before us sharpening his teeth for a blazing day. I shall never forget the heat of that Saturday. Eighty degrees in the shade. You may imagine what we felt on the long dusty road with not a tree to shelter us, quite the exception in Belgium. Only for our umbrellas I am certain we should have got sunstroke, as it was we reached Liège quite worn out and exhausted. On the road we passed a sign post with the inscription: 'Half a mile to Booz.' The invitation was too tempting to resist. We turned down the road, found a jovial priest; and an hour afterwards two

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[8] Sarsfield was wounded at the battle of Landen (29th July, 1693) and died shortly after. There does not seem to be any historical evidence for the authenticity of "his dying words."—O'Callaghan, *History of the Irish Brigades in the Service of France,* (Cameron and Ferguson edition), p. 175.

dusty pilgrims emerged from his house singing 'Vive Monsieur le Curé'—only the heat, nothing more!"

During this broiling Saturday, as the pilgrims were toiling along the dusty road, they joyfully espied a pump. Fr. Doyle seized the handle and Fr. Roberts put his head under the spout. At this moment a man came running towards them, shouting in Flemish. Fr. Doyle got an inspiration, told his companion to stand clear, then proceeded to work the handle vigorously, when out flowed—liquid manure! However, when after a tiresome trudge across Liège they arrived at the College of S. Servais, they were able to have a real wash in the open-air swimming bath.

After resting in Liège during Sunday, they started early on Monday for Chèvremont, up on the hills, where they said Mass and breakfasted. Returning to Liège they proceeded to Tongres, the novitiate and tertian-house of the French Jesuits expelled from Toulouse. The good Rector insisted on their resting a day and then sent them off by train to visit Maastricht, in Holland, where the Dutch Jesuits had a house.

The pilgrims returned to Louvain via Hasselt, Alken and Diest; at the last-named town they said Mass in the old home of S. John Berchmans. As time was running short, they took the train from Louvain to Ghent, and so reached Tronchiennes in time for the annual retreat. Thus ended this little pilgrimage which is recorded here not only for its humorous incidents, but also to help to complete the picture of the human side of Fr. Doyle, which may be dimmed or forgotten in some of the subsequent pages of this biography. It was his first trip through Belgium; little did he then think that in less than ten years he was destined to tramp many a weary mile over Belgian soil and to meet upon it his tragic death—with the same lighthearted cheerfulness as characterised his first pilgrimage.

So far we have contented ourselves with a surface view of Fr. Doyle's life as a tertian, chronicling his external doings and quoting his ordinary correspondence. The description of his whirlwind missionary campaign to Great Britain and of his rather amusing pedestrian tour to Chèvremont has

given us no hint of any deeper spiritual striving or interior crisis. Yet if we reverently open the record of his intimate thoughts, written solely for God and himself, we shall find that the tertianship was a landmark in his inner life. He was an apt pupil in the "school of the heart," whence he emerged a master in spiritual craftmanship. He availed to the full of all the helps and opportunities provided. During the year (July, 1907, to July, 1908) he had altogether fifty-two days of retreat—eight days before ordination, thirty days in the long retreat, two triduums, and eight days more at the close of his stay in Tronchiennes. He was fortunate, too, in the Spiritual Father, Père Adolphus Petit (author of the well-known book, *Sacerdos rite instructus*), whom he thus describes in a letter:

"There is a wonderful little old priest here, named Fr. Petit, small in name and small in size—he is about three feet high. He is eighty-five, but as active as a man of thirty, being constantly away giving retreats. I have tried several times to get down to the chapel at four o'clock in the morning before him, but he is always there when I come in. He is a dear saintly old man with wonderful faith and simplicity. In the middle of an exhortation in the chapel, he will turn round to the Tabernacle and say: 'Is not that true, my Jesus?' He is giving a retreat here this moment to a hundred and ten gentlemen."

This is how Fr. Doyle reviewed the year during his retreat in July, 1908:

"I have finished the tertianship. Looking back on the past year, I see now in how many ways I could have spent this time more profitably, been more faithful to order of time, more exact, etc. At the same time I thank God from my heart that this year has been fruitful in grace, and, I feel, has worked a wonderful change in me. I feel a greater desire to do all I can to please God and to become holy; a greater attraction for prayer, more desire for mortification and increased facility in performing acts of self-denial. I know the work of my sanctification is only begun, the hard work and the real work remains to be done.

"This closing retreat of the tertianship has confirmed the resolution made during the Long Retreat to refuse God nothing, to strive might and main to make up for the past wasted years of my religious life by all the fervour and earnestness I am capable of.

"The desire to be a saint has been growing in my heart all during this year, especially the last couple of months. God has given me this desire; He will not refuse the grace, if only I am faithful in the future. How good you have been to me, O my God, waiting so patiently for me to return to You! Help me now generously to do all You want me to do. Amen."

A spiritual development of which this is the epilogue seems to merit a more detailed description. Hence the notes which he kept during his Long Retreat will be presently reproduced in their entirety.[9] We shall thus be enabled to follow Fr. Doyle's soul-pilgrimage step by step. It may be useful to give here by way of preface a few general ideas about the scope of the Exercises. According to St. Ignatius, "the name of spiritual exercises is applied to any method of preparing and disposing the soul to free itself from all inordinate affections, and after it has freed itself from them, to seek and find the will of God concerning the ordering of life for the salvation of one's soul."[10] Thus a retreat is designed for earnest souls —only in a very attenuated form can the Exercises be adapted to a mission for sinners; and it has a definite object—to find God's will. At the beginning St. Ignatius lays down the "first principle and foundation" which must be admitted at the outset. It is the basis of all valuation of life: Man was made for God, all other things for man to bring him to God. Thus the exercitant accepts in advance and in general the practical consequences which logically follow from this acceptance of the Creator's sovereign rights. Then for a whole week he must seek to eliminate all sin and disorder and to examine his

[9] The Directory of the Exercises, composed by order of Father Claudius Aquaviva, recommends the taking of personal notes during a retreat.—*Directorium* iii. 5.

[10] *Annotations*, § 1.

soul. In the second week the exercitant is brought face to face with Jesus Christ. Will he follow the invitation and enlist in the King's service? He must count up the cost, he must study Christ's standard, he must at least aspire to the highest and noblest service. Then comes the great choice, which St. Ignatius calls "the election," and which is the culminating point of the Exercises. In ordinary retreats, of course, there is no great decisive choice to be made,[11] but there is always some "reformation of life," some re-ordering of one's life in the light of the great spiritual truths and scenes which have been marshalled before the soul. God's will is known and accepted. One more week is spent in meditating on the Passion, and a fourth and last is devoted to the contemplation of the Risen Master, in order to habituate the soul to pure love and to strengthen the resolutions taken. Such, in brief essentials, are the Exercises through which in their entirety each Jesuit passes twice in his life, once as a novice at the outset of his spiritual life, and finally as a priest at the outset of his ministry. The following chapter contains the diary which for his own guidance Fr. Doyle kept during his second and last Long Retreat.[12]

[11] In his Long Retreat Fr. Doyle made his election to volunteer for the foreign mission. See pp. 66, 75.

[12] Reference may be made to the convenient English translation of *The Text of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius,* London, Burns & Oates, 1913[4]; or to *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, Spanish and English with a Continuous Commentary,* by Joseph Rickaby, S.J., 1915 The best critical edition of the text, together with the old Directories is published in the *Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu: Exercitia Spiritualia,* Madrid, 1919. One of the best psychological and historical accounts of the Exercises is Père A. Brou's *Exercices Spirituels,* Paris, 1922.

Chapter IV

DIARY OF LONG RETREAT [1]

Tronchiennes, 10th October, 1907.

I BEGIN the Long Retreat this evening with very varied feelings. I feel a great desire and determination to make this retreat as I have never made one before, for I know this is the turning point in my life—I can never be the same again. I want to be generous with God and to refuse Him nothing. I do not want to say, "I will go just so far and no farther." Hence I feel my cowardly and weak nature dreading this retreat, for I feel our Lord is going to ask some big sacrifice from me, that He expects much from me. He has been tugging at my heart for so many years, urging me in so many ways to give myself wholly to Him, to give all and refuse Him nothing. I dread lest now I shall again refuse Him—perhaps it is the last time He will ask me to do what He wants. My loving Jesus, I will, *I will* be generous with You now at last. But You must aid me, it must be Your work, I am so cowardly. Make me see clearly Your holy will. *Domine, quid me vis facere?* [2]

[THE FOUNDATION [3]]

God had some special end in creating me, some particular part in His great plan. I was not created as it were one of a great number who came into the world on the same

[1] The retreat-journal is reproduced just as it stands. A few headings [in square brackets] have been inserted and some explanatory footnotes added. Reference should, of course, be made throughout to the text of the Spiritual Exercises.

[2] Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?—*Acts*, 9, 6.

[3] St. Ignatius calls this preliminary consideration on the end of man "the principle and foundation" (*principium et fundamentum*).

day; but God had a particular object in giving me life. Why did He create me?

How miserable has been my service of God since I entered religion! A bit fervent one day, the next dissipated and careless, even since my ordination. I have fallen away from the fervent way in which I had resolved to live henceforth. I feel inclined to despond; but with God's help I will go on, trying now at last to make some little progress in serving Him worthily. My true service of God consists in performing the ordinary actions of the day as perfectly and as fervently as I can, with a pure intention for love of my Jesus. It is a mistake to think that I can only serve Him by preaching, saving souls, etc. What would have become of me if I had treated an earthly master as I have served God?

To be indifferent does not mean to desire things which are hard to nature, but a readiness and determination to embrace them when once the will of God is known. In this sense I think I am indifferent about going to the Congo. But I must force myself to be willing to accept the way of life which God seems to be leading me to and wants me to adopt. My God, I dread it—but "not my will but Thine."

God has a perfect right to ask from me what He wills; I am His servant. How then can I be free to do or not to do whatever He may ask?

I close the *Fundamentum* with feelings of humility and sorrow at the thought of my past service of God. How little reverence! Thank God, I have still time to make up for it. One thing alone can repair the lost years—a life of great fervour.

FIRST WEEK

[SIN]

I can say with all truth that only for the great mercy of God I should now have been in hell. I deserved it for my years of tepidity in Clongowes. Never did the good God show His goodness to me more than in saving me from grievous sin. I

have here a second motive of gratitude to urge me to do all He wants.

The meditation on the barren fig-tree (*S. Luke* 13.) recalled to my mind this gospel which I read in the Mass at Paray-le-Monial. For sixteen years has Jesus been seeking fruit from my soul, and especially in these last three years of preparation for the priesthood. I have no excuse for He has told me how to produce that fruit, especially by the exact discharge of each little duty of the moment. "Spare it for this year." Never shall I have this opportunity again of becoming holy; and if now I do not "dig round" this unfruitful tree so that it bear much fruit, Jesus will surely "cut it down" by withdrawing His graces and *loving invitations*.

Truly I have ever been in the community "a running sore" of harm and evil example. My Jesus, can I ever make amends for all the harm I have done? Help me from this instant to try and do so by my fervent earnest life. Help me to become thoroughly changed and to do all You want of me.

This thought came to me. If Jesus wants me to go to the Congo, I shall do more for souls there than by remaining at home. Besides, my sacrifice will obtain grace for others to do more good than I ever could.

"Because you have sinned, cursed be the earth in your work." (*Genesis* 3. 17.) I see here the reason why my work for souls must be unfruitful. God will never bless it while I have an affection for sin or lead a careless life.

[HELL]

I can imagine I am a soul in hell, and God in His mercy is saying to me, "Return to the world for this year and on your manner of life during the year will depend your returning to hell or not." What a life I should lead! How little I should think of suffering, of mortification! How I would rejoice in suffering! How perfectly each moment would be spent! If God treated me as I deserved, I should be in hell now. Shall I ever again have cause for grumbling or complaining, no matter

what may happen? My habit of constantly speaking uncharitably of others, and, in general, faults of the tongue, seem to me the chief reason why I derive so little fruit from my Mass and spiritual duties. Nothing dries up the fountains of grace so much as an affection for sin.

[DEATH]

Death is the end of all things here, the end of time, of merit, of pain and mortification, of a hard life. It is the commencement of an eternal life of happiness and joy. "God will wipe away all tears from their eyes." (*Apoc.* 21, 4.) In this light, life is short indeed and penance sweet. I thought if I knew I had only one year to live, how fervently I would spend it, how each moment would be utilised. Yet I know well I may not live a week more—do I really believe this?

[JUDGEMENT]

Oct. 16th. Meditating on the Particular Judgement, God gave me great light. I realised that I should have to give an exact account of every action of my life and for every instant of time. To take only my seventeen years of religious life, what account could I give of the 6,000 hours of meditation, 7,000 Masses, 12,000 examinations of conscience, etc.? Then my time—how have I spent every moment? I resolved not to let a day more pass without seriously trying to reform my life in the manner in which I perform my ordinary daily duties. For years I have been "going to begin," and from time to time made some slight efforts at improvement. But now, dear Jesus, let this change be the work of Thy right hand.

To perform each action well I will try and do them: (*a*) with a pure intention often renewed, (*b*) *attente*—earnestly, punctually, exactly, (*c*) *devote*—with great fervour.

How little I think of committing venial sin, and how soon I forget I have done so! Yet God hates nothing more than

even the shadow of sin, nothing does more harm to my spiritual progress and hinders any real advance in holiness. My God, give me an intense hatred and dread and horror of the smallest sin. I want to please You and love You and serve You as I have never done before. Let me begin by stamping out all sin in my soul.

We could not take pleasure in living in the company of one whose body is one running, festering sore; neither can God draw us close to Himself, caress and love us, if our souls are covered with venial sin, more loathsome and horrible in His eyes than the most foul disease. To avoid mortal sin I must carefully guard against deliberate venial sin, so to avoid venial sin I must fly from the shadow of imperfection in my actions. How often in the past have I done things when I did not know if they were sins or only deliberate imperfections—and how little I cared, my God!

[THE PRODIGAL SON [4]]

One of the obstacles to my leading a fervent life is the thought of what others may think. I would often wish to do some act of mortification, but I am prevented because I know others will see it. Again, I desire to keep certain rules which I have often broken (*e.g.* Latin conversation), but a false shame, a fear of what others may say, stops me.[5] I know this is a foolish, mean and small spirit; but it is alas! too true in my case. I must pray to overcome it and make some generous acts against this false shame and pride.

For fifteen years has Jesus been waiting for me to return to Him, to return to the fervour of my first year of religious life. During that time how many pressing and loving invitations has He not given me? What lights and inspirations, remorse of conscience, and how many good resolves which were never carried into effect. O my God, I feel now as if I cannot

[4] A meditation on God's mercy is usually added at the end of the First Week of the Exercises.

[5] "Let all . . . speak Latin." (*Rules of Scholastics,* 10.)

resist You longer. Your infinite patience and desire to bring me to You has broken the ice of my cold heart. "I will arise and go" to You, humbled and sorrowful, and for the rest of my life give You of my very best. Help me, sweet Jesus, by Your grace, for I am weak and cowardly.

FRUIT OF FIRST WEEK

I realise in a way I never did before that God created me for His service, that He has a strict right that I should serve Him perfectly, and that every moment of my life is His and given to me for the one end of praising and serving Him. I recalled with horror how often I have wandered from this my end, what an appalling amount of time I have wasted, and how few of my actions were done for God, or worthy of being offered to Him. I see what I should have been and what I am. But the thought of Jesus waiting and eagerly looking out for me, the prodigal, during fifteen years, has filled me with hope and confidence and new resolve to turn to my dearest Jesus and give Him all He asks.

I have begun to try to perform each little action with great fervour and exactness, having as my aim to get back the fervour of my first year's novitiate.

Domine, quid me vis facere? [6] I am ready to do Your will, no matter how hard it may seem to me.

17 October, 1907. Amen.

SECOND WEEK

18 Oct., 1907.

[ON THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST]

I seemed at prayer to hear Jesus asking me if I were willing to do all He would ask of me. I feel much less fear than in

[6] Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?—*Acts* 9, 6.

the first week, of what this may be, and greater courage and desire even for sacrifices.

This thought came to me: I am not to take the lives of others in the house as the standard of my own, what may be lawful for them is not for me; their life is most pleasing to God, such a life for me would not be so; God wants something higher, nobler, more generous from me, and for this will offer me special graces.

Meditating on the Kingdom of Christ, the thought suddenly came to me to make this offering: *O aeterne Domine . . . dummodo sit maius servitium Tuum et laus Tua . . . et si Maiestas Tua sanctissima voluerit me eligere ac recipere ad talem vitam et statum, me Tibi offero pro Missione Congolensi. Fiat voluntas Tua. Amen*[7]

I feel that I could go through fire and water to serve such a man as Napoleon, that no sacrifice he could ask would be too hard. What would the army think of me if Napoleon said, "I want you to do so and so," and I replied, "But, your Majesty, I am very sensitive to cold, I want to have a sleep in the afternoon, to rest when I am tired, and I really could not do without plenty of good things to eat!"—would I not deserve to have my uniform torn from me and be driven from the army, not even allowed to serve in the ranks? How do I serve Jesus my King? What kind of service? generous or making conditions? in easy things but not in hard ones? What have I done for Jesus? What am I doing for Jesus? What shall I do for Jesus?

[THE NATIVITY]

What impressed me most in the meditation on the Nativity was the thought that Jesus could have been born in wealth

[7] "O eternal Lord . . . provided it be for Thy greater service and praise . . . and if Thy most Holy Majesty be pleased to choose and receive me for such a life and state," (these words are taken from St. Ignatius's meditation on the Kingdom of Christ), I offer myself to Thee for the Congo Mission. Thy will be done. Amen.

and luxury, or at least with the ordinary comforts of life, but He *chose* all that was hard, unpleasant and uncomfortable. This He did *for me,* to show me the life I must lead *for Him.* If I want to be with Christ, I must lead the life of Christ, and in that life there was little of what was pleasing to nature. I think I have been following Christ, yet how pleasant and comfortable my life has always been—ever avoiding cold, hunger, hard work, disagreeable things, humiliations, etc. My Jesus, You are speaking to my heart now. I cannot mistake Your voice or hide from myself what You want with me and what my future life should be. Help me for I am weak and cowardly.

By entering religion and taking my vows I have given myself over absolutely to God and His service. He, therefore, has a right to be served in the way He wishes. If then He asks me to enter on a hard, mortified life and spend myself working for Him, how can I resist His will and desire? "Oh my God, make me a saint, and I consent to suffer all You ask for the rest of my life." What is God asking from me now? Shall I go back on that offering?

[THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT]

Great as was the poverty of Jesus in the cave at Bethlehem, it was nothing compared to His destitution during the Flight into Egypt. Again this was voluntary and chosen and borne *propter me.*[8]

I contrast the obedience of St. Joseph with my obedience. His so prompt, unquestioning, uncomplaining, perfect; mine given so grudgingly, perhaps exterior, but not interior conformity with the will of the Superior. I realise my faults in this matter, and for the future will try to practise the most perfect obedience, even and especially in little things. "The obedient man will speak of victory." (*Proverbs* 21, 28.)

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[8] For my sake.

[THE HIDDEN LIFE]

During the reflection on the Hidden Life I got a light that here was something in which I could easily imitate our Lord and make my life resemble His. I felt a strong impulse to resolve to take up as one of the chief objects of my life the exact and thorough performance of each duty, trying to do it as Jesus would have done, with the same pure intention, exquisite exactness and fervour. To copy in all my actions—walking, eating, praying—Jesus, my model in the little house of Nazareth. This light was sudden, clear and strong. To do this perfectly will require constant, unflagging fervour. Will not this be part of my "hard life"?

I should examine all my actions, taking Jesus as my model and example. What a vast difference between my prayer and His; between my use of time, my way of speaking, walking, dealing with others, etc., and that of the child Jesus! If I could only keep Him before my eyes always, my life would be far different from what it has been.

Each fresh meditation on the life of our Lord impresses on me more and more the necessity of conforming my life to His in every detail, if I wish to please Him and become holy. To do something great and heroic may never come, but I can make my life heroic by faithfully and daily putting my best effort into each duty as it comes round. It seems to me I have failed to keep my resolutions because I have not acted from the motive of the love of God. Mortification, prayer, hard work, become sweet when done for the love of Jesus.

[THE TWO STANDARDS]

My victory over myself, my inclinations, is a victory won for the cause of Jesus. I have been a deserter to the camp of Satan, a traitor; but now my King has pardoned me and re-

ceived me back. How am I going to show my gratitude and make up for the past which I cannot recall—the time lost, duties omitted or done without love or fervour, little sacrifices refused, my many, many sins? Shall I not be busy at every hour, fighting for my King, gaining victory after victory over the enemy, over myself? My Jesus, help me now to work for You, to slave for You, to fight for You and then *to die* for You!

[THE THREE CLASSES OF MEN]

It is easy for me to test my love for Jesus. Do I love what He loved and came down from heaven to find—suffering, humiliation, contempt, want of all things, incoveniences, hunger, weariness, cold? The more I seek for and embrace these things, the nearer am I drawing to Jesus and the deeper is my love for Him. While praying for light to know what God wants from me in the matter of mortifying my appetite, a voice seemed to say: "There are other things besides food in which you can be generous with Me, other *hard things* which I want you to do." I thought of all the secret self-denial contained in constant hard work, not giving up when a bit tired, not yielding to desire for sleep, not running off to bed if a bit unwell, bearing little sufferings without relief, cold and heat without complaint, and, above all, the constant never-ending mortification to do each act *perfectly*. This light has given me a good deal of consolation, for I see I can do much for Jesus that is hard without being singular or departing from common life.

It seems to me that Jesus is asking from me a life in which I am to make war upon "comfortableness" as far as possible, a life without comfort, even that which is allowed by the rule.

The example of men of the Third Class in the world should shame me. What determination, what prolonged effort, what deadly earnestness, in the man who has determined to succeed in his profession! No sacrifice is too great for him, he wants to succeed, he *will* succeed. My desire, so far, to be a saint

is only the desire of the man of the First Class. It gratifies my pride, but I make no real progress in perfection—I do not really *will* it.

The love of Jesus makes the impossible easy and sweet.

[THE THREE DEGREES OF HUMILITY]

I have now reached the great meditation, the crucial point of the retreat. God has been very good to me in enlightening my mind to see His will and in filling my heart with a most ardent desire to do it—cost what it may. Jesus, dear Jesus, I want to please You, to do exactly what You want of me, to give all generously this time without any reserve, and never to go back on my resolution. In this spirit I made the midnight meditation on October 25th, the Feast of B. Margaret Mary. I saw clearly what I knew years ago, but would not admit: that God is asking from me the practice of the Third Degree [9] in all its perfection as far as I am capable. I cannot deny it or shut my eyes to this truth any longer. Should I not be grateful to the good God for choosing me for such a life, since it will be all the work of His grace and not my own doing? God wants me to put perfection—sanctity—before me and to "go straight" for that, for holiness. He wants me not to be content with the ordinary good life of the average religious, but to aim at something higher, nobler, more worthy of Him. He wants me to make ceaseless war on myself, my passions, inclinations, habits; to smash and break down my own will, to mortify it in all things so that it may be free for His grace to act upon; in a word, to aim at the perfection of the Third Degree and all that that means, not for one day or a month or a year, but for the rest of my life, faithfully, unceasingly, constantly, *without rest or intermission.* To do this I must strive to cut away all comfort in my life, choose that which is "hard," go

[9] "The third degree is the most perfect humility; when . . . the better to imitate Christ our Lord and to become actually more like to Him, I desire and choose poverty with Christ poor rather than riches, contempt with Christ contemned rather than honours. . . ."—*Spiritual Exercises.*

against my natural inclination, and give up the easy self-indulgent life I have hitherto led. The motive for this is the immense, deep, real love of the Heart of Jesus for *me,* His example which He wants me to follow, for He chose want of all things, suffering and a hard comfortless life, and by doing the same I imitate Him and become more and more like to Him. Can I do this for five, ten, twenty years—lead a crucified life so long? Jesus does not ask that, but only that I do so for *this day* so quickly passed and with it the recollection of the little suffering and mortifications endured—once over, all is over, but the eternal reward remains.

My Jesus, I feel that at last You have conquered, Your love has conquered; and last night, kneeling before the image of Your Sacred Heart, I promised You to begin this new life, to begin at last to serve You as You urged me to do during the past sixteen years. I made my promise, knowing well my weakness, but trusting in Your all-powerful grace to do what seems almost impossible to my cowardly nature. *Ego dixi: nunc coepi.*[10] I promise You, sweet Jesus, to serve You perfectly with all the fervour of my soul, aiming at the Third Degree in its perfection. I make this offering through the hands of B. Margaret Mary. Amen.

Tronchiennes, Oct. 25th, 1907.
Feast of B. Margaret Mary.

What account shall I give of this resolution when I stand before my God for judgement?

PRACTICE OF THE THIRD DEGREE

I. *Accepto.* I will receive with joy all unpleasant things which I must bear: (*a*) pain, sickness, heat, cold, food; (*b*) house, employment, rules, customs; (*c*) trials of religious life, companions; (*d*) reprimands, humiliations; (*e*) anything which is a cross.

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[10] I said: Now have I begun—*Psalm* 76, 11.

II. *Volo et Desidero.* I will wish and desire that these things may happen to me, that so I may resemble my Jesus more.

III. *Eligo.* With all my might I will strive every day *agere contra in omnibus:* [11] (*a*) against my faults; (*b*) against my own will; (*c*) against my ease and comfort; (*d*) against the desires of the body; (*e*) against my habit and inclination of performing my duties negligently and without fervour.

Finis

The reformation of one's life must be the work of every day. I should take each rule and duty, think how Jesus acted, or would have done, and contrast my conduct with His.

I think it better not to make any definite resolutions about mortification, such as "I will never do so-and-so." I know how such resolutions have fared. But I am determined to keep up a constant war against myself, now in one matter and now in another, varying the kinds of mortification as much as possible, but trying to do ten little acts each day.

We have a strict right to the love of God, because our vocation is to follow Him; we cannot do this unless we love Him. Jesus will assuredly give me a sensible love of Him, if I only *ask*. I must ask, seek, and knock daily and hourly.

Fr. Petit told me that the spirit of the Third Degree is not so much the practice of austerities as the denial of one's will and judgement and perfect abnegation of self and humility. This is the spirit of our rules which are simply the Third Degree.

Have I a real hunger and thirst for the love and the service of Jesus? Is it growing?

If I do not begin to serve God as I ought *now*, when shall I do so? shall I ever? This retreat is a time of special grace, and if my coöperation is wanting, Jesus may pass by and not return. The devil has made me put off my thorough conversion to God for seventeen years, making me content myself with the resolution of "later on really beginning in earnest and

[11] To act against (myself) in all things.

becoming a saint." What might not have been done in that time!

The reason, said Fr. Petit, why we find our life so hard, mortification difficult, and why we are inclined to avoid all that we dislike, is because we have *no real love for Jesus.*

The Gospel says, *Erat docens cotidie in Templo.*[12] How often, and for how long, am I in the chapel? Is the chapel the place where people know I am to be found? What a difference it would make in my visits, if only I *realised* the real corporal presence of Jesus in the Tabernacle. This is a grace I must earnestly ask for.

Erat pernoctans in oratione Dei.[13] I say I am anxious to imitate the life of Jesus, here is something in which I can do so. Would it not be possible (afterwards) to spend an hour at night in the chapel after examen?

FRUIT OF THE SECOND WEEK

A great desire to know our Lord better, His attractive character, His personal love for me, the resolve to read the life of Christ and study the Gospels.

I feel also a longing to love Jesus passionately, to try my very best to please Him, and to do all I think will please Him. I see nothing will be dearer to Him than my sanctification, chiefly attained by the perfection with which I perform even the smallest action. "All for love of Jesus."

1 Nov., 1907.

THE ELECTION

REASONS AGAINST

(1) I am not certain of the will of God.

(2) I should like to remain for some years in Ireland and work for souls.

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[12] He was teaching daily in the Temple.—*S. Luke* 19, 47.

[13] He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.—*S. Luke* 6, 12.

(3) Should I not do more good by remaining in Ireland instead of burying myself among a few blacks whose language I do not know?

(4) I may have a long useful life at home; on the mission probably a very short one.

REASONS FOR

(1) The almost certain conviction that I have a real vocation for the foreign mission.

(2) This thought has been in my mind for over twenty years and the thought of it has given me great pleasure and consolation.

(3) My desire, even as a boy, to be a martyr.

(4) The letter I wrote as a novice.[14]

(5) The feeling that, if I do not offer myself, I certainly shall not please God.

(6) The attraction I feel for a life of real privation and suffering.

(7) This is much stronger since the retreat, in order to be more like Jesus.

(8) In the spirit of the Third Degree I should make this sacrifice.

(9) The hardship of the life a great help to holiness.

(10) The attraction the life of St. Peter Claver has always had for me, my desire to imitate him.

(11) The souls I shall be able to save, and who otherwise would never see heaven.

(12) As an English-speaking priest I may be of help to the missionaries.

(13) I feel quite content that I was doing God's will when I resolved two years ago to offer myself for the foreign mission.

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[14] Presumably he volunteered for the foreign mission.

A. M. D. G.

MY ELECTION

To-day the First Friday of November, the Feast of All Saints, I made my election about offering myself for the Congo Mission. During the retreat I have been praying and thinking over this, asking for light to know God's holy will which alone I seek. The reasons for offering myself are overwhelming, but one thought troubled and upset me—I see in this that it came from the evil one. "By remaining in Ireland and working zealously for many years could I not do far more for God's glory than by going on the mission where almost certainly I shall not live long?"

(1) I got light to see that this was only a delusion of self-love, seeking, under pretext of good, a life gratifying to human nature and my pride.

(2) Would this life be pleasing to God, if He wanted me to work for Him among the negroes?

(3) God is able to open up a vast field for my zeal if He wishes it, no matter where I may be.

(4) What I lose by rejecting the glorious opportunity of the foreign mission to become like to Jesus, the help to sanctity, the *possibility of martyrdom.*

(5) Lastly I simply felt I was powerless to refuse Jesus this sacrifice which He has been asking for over twenty years. I could not refuse and live and die in peace. How after such clear lights and inspirations could I face Jesus at my judgement, knowing I did not do what He wanted?

During Benediction I resolved to confirm the resolution already made at Milltown: to offer my life for the Congo mission. In doing so I choose nothing myself but to place myself without reserve in the hands of my Superiors that they may declare God's holy will to me. An interior voice seemed to say, "You will never regret this resolution and offering."

I offered my resolution to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, praying Him to accept me for this life. Since then my soul has been filled with joy and consolation. I am quite happy and content, for I feel God has given me grace to do *what He wants.*

Feast of All Saints, 1907.

THIRD WEEK

2 Nov., 1907.

I was greatly struck and helped yesterday by these words of the "Imitation": *Fili, sine me tecum agere quod volo, ego scio quid expediat tibi.*[15] They gave me courage to place myself without reserve in God's hands. How happy I feel now that I have done so and made my sacrifice.

[THE PASSION]

All my life my study has been to avoid suffering as much as possible, to make my life a comfortable one. How unlike my Jesus I have been, who sought to suffer on every occasion for *me,* for *me.* I should be glad when pain comes and welcome it, because it makes me more like Jesus.

During His Passion our Lord was bound and dragged from place to place. I have hourly opportunities of imitating Him by going cheerfully to the duty of the moment—recreation when I want to be quiet, a walk when I would rather stay in my room, some unpleasant duty I did not expect, a call of charity which means great inconvenience for myself.

My denial of Jesus has been baser than that of Peter, for I have refused to listen to His voice calling me back for fifteen years. But Jesus has won my heart in this retreat by His patient look of love. God grant my repentance may in some

[15] "My child, let Me do with you what I will; I know what is good for you."—*Imitation of Christ* iii. 17, 1. A favourite quotation of Fr. Doyle's.

degree be like St. Peter's. I could indeed weep bitterly for the wasted sinful past in the Society, the time I have squandered, the little good done, and the awful amount of harm by my bad example in every house in which I have been. What might I not have done for Jesus! What a saint I might have been now! Dear Jesus, You forgave St. Peter, forgive me also for *I will* serve You now.

At the community Mass this morning *I again felt an overpowering desire to become a saint.* It came suddenly, filling my soul with consolation. Surely God has an object in inspiring me so often with this desire and has great graces for me if I will only coöperate with Him.

Reflecting on this inspiration afterwards, I saw more clearly that the chief thing God wants from me at present is an extraordinary and exquisite perfection in every little thing I do, even the odd Hail Marys of the day; that each day there must be some improvement in the fervour, the purity of intention, the exactness with which I do things, that in this will chiefly lie my sanctification as it sanctified St. John Berchmans. I see here a vast field for work and an endless service of mortification. To keep faithfully to this resolve will require heroism, so that day after day I may not flag in the fervour of my service of the good God.

The fruit of the Third Week, says Fr. Petit, is great compassion and increase of fortitude. To "suffer with" Jesus, to long for sufferings must be my aim and prayer. Since my "Promise" I have been doing ten acts of self-denial—why not try to make it thirty a day? I have so much to atone for, so much time wasted in the past, so little of life left. Ceaseless war on your comfort, no rest now, eternity is long enough.

[THE SCOURGING]

During all these long years Jesus has been standing bound at the pillar, while I have cruelly scourged Him by my ingratitude and neglect of my vocation. Each action carelessly done, the hours spent in sleep, each moment wasted, have been so many

stripes on my Saviour's bleeding body. He has been bearing all this to save me from His Father's just anger. And all the while I have heard His gentle voice, "My child, will you not love Me? I want your heart. I want you to strive and become a saint, to be generous with Me and refuse Me nothing." *Can* I now turn away again as before and refuse to listen?

With Jesus naked and shivering with bitter cold at the pillar, I will try joyfully to bear the effects of cold. With Jesus covered with wounds, I, too, will try to endure little sufferings without relief.

[CALVARY]

The greatest thirst of Jesus on the Cross was his thirst for souls. He saw then the graces and inspirations He would give me to save souls for Him. In what way shall I correspond and console my Saviour?

The thought has been very much in my mind during this week that Jesus asks from me the sacrifice of all the pleasures of the world—such as villa,[16] plays, concerts, football-matches, cinematograph, etc.; that I am to seek my recreation and find my pleasure in Him alone. Life is indeed too short now for me to waste a moment in such things. May God give me a great disgust for all these things in which formerly I took such delight!

This morning I had a great struggle not to sleep. Then God rewarded me with much light and generous resolve. I was meditating on my desire to die a martyr's death for Jesus, and then asked myself if I was really in earnest, why did I not begin to die to myself, to die to my own will, the inclinations and desires of my lower nature. I wish to die a martyr's death —but am I willing to live a martyr's life? To live a crucified life "seeking in all things my constant mortification"? [17]

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[16] Summer vacation.

[17] *Summarium Constitutionum S.J.*, 12. See below p. 84.

A COMPACT WITH JESUS

"My God, I promise You, kneeling before the image of Your Sacred Heart, that I will do my best to lead a martyr's life by constantly denying my will and doing all that I think will please You, if You in return will grant me the grace of martyrdom."

A life of martyrdom is to be the price of a martyr's crown.

FRUIT OF THE THIRD WEEK

The thought that Jesus has suffered so much for me to atone for my sins and past careless life in religion, has filled me with a great desire to love Him in return with all my heart. I feel, too, a growing hunger and thirst for suffering and mortification, because it makes me more like to my suffering Jesus, suffering all with joy for me.

Every day has deepened my shame, sorrow and hatred for my negligent tepid life since I entered the Society, and strengthened my resolve and desire to make amends by a life of great fervour. I feel my past sinful life will be a spur for me to aim at great holiness.

FOURTH WEEK

10 Nov., 1907.

The reason I find it so hard to love God, why I have so little affection for Him, is because of my attachment to venial sin and my constant deliberate imperfections. I have, as it were, been trying to run with an immense weight round my feet; I have tried to reach the unitive way without passing through the purgative, to jump to the top of the ladder without climbing up the steps; so that after all these years I am still as barren

of real love of God as when first I entered religion. No, I must work earnestly now to remove the very shadow of sin from my life, then to imitate the humble suffering life of Jesus and thus win His love.

I look upon it as a great grace that in spite of my tepid life Jesus has given me an ardent desire to love Him. I long eagerly to love my Jesus passionately, with an intense ardent love such as the saints had; and yet I remain cold and indifferent with little zeal for His glory.

[EMMAUS]

From the Tabernacle Jesus seems to say, "Stay with Me for it is towards evening and the day is now far spent" [18] This should urge me to come to visit Him often.

If my resurrection is a real one and is to produce fruit, it must be external, so that all may see I am not the same man, that my life is changed in Christ.

[APPARITION BY THE LAKESIDE]

Lord, You know I love You *less* than any others, but I long and desire to love You more than all the rest. Take my heart, dear Lord, and hide it in Your own, that so I may only love what You love and desire what You desire. May I find no pleasure in the things of this world, its pleasures and amusement; but may my one delight be in thinking of You, working for You, loving You, and staying in Your sweet presence before the Tabernacle. Why do You want my love, dear Jesus, and why have You left me no rest all these years till I gave You at last my poor heart to love You, and You alone? This ceaseless pleading for my love fills me with hope and confidence that, sinful as my life has been in the past, You have forgiven and forgotten it all.

[18] *S. Luke* 24. 29.

Thanks a million times, dearest Jesus, for all Your goodness. I *will* love and serve You now till death.

[1]3 Nov., 1907.[19] Amen.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RETREAT

At the close of the retreat my soul is full of many emotions. God has been more than good to me, has given me great lights and wonderful graces. During the whole month my eyes have been opening more and more to the disorder of my past life. I have been simply amazed and astounded how I could possibly have lived the life I did, especially my years in college, such abuse of grace, such awful waste of time, neglect of opportunities of learning, of becoming holy, and above all the harm this careless tepid life has done others. I have realised how little I thought about committing sin and, far less, of deliberate breaches of rule. Now, through God's great mercy, I feel an intense hatred of such a life, and as if it would be impossible ever again to live so. I feel that indeed the retreat has worked a marvellous change in me. I feel I am not the same in my views, sentiments, and way of looking at things, that I am a different man. I have never felt as I do now after any other retreat before. God must indeed have poured His grace abundantly into my soul, for it seems to me that a deep lasting impression has been made, which I trust will ever remain. My soul is in great peace. I feel as if at last I have given God all He wanted from me during so many years by making resolutions which I have made; that I could now die content, for at last I have really begun to try and serve the good God with all my heart. I feel also a great longing to love Jesus very, very much, to draw very close to His Sacred Heart, and to be ever united to Him, always thinking of Him and praying. I long ardently to do something now to make up for my neglect in the past—to give myself heart and soul to the service of God,

[19] There is here inserted a table with two numbers (each about 500) corresponding to the morning and evening of each day of retreat. This evidently records the number of aspirations made.

to toil for Him, to wear myself out for Him. I wish to be able never to seek rest or amusement outside of what obedience imposes, so that every moment may be spent for Jesus. I have not a moment to lose, I cannot afford to refuse Him a single sacrifice if I wish to do anything for Jesus and become a saint before I die. If I go to the Congo, I certainly shall not live long. In any case can I promise myself even one day more? *Finis venit.*[20] I must try to look upon this day as my last on earth and do all I can and suffer all I can for these few hours. It is not a question of keeping up full steam for years, but only for to-day.

If I am faithful to the resolution of "doing all things perfectly," I shall effectually cut away the numerous faults in all my actions. By working hard at the Third Degree I shall best correct those things to which my attention has been drawn. I know all this is going to cost me much, that I shall have a fierce battle to fight with the devil and myself. But I begin with great hope and confidence, for since Jesus has inspired me to make these resolutions and urged me on till I did so, His grace will not be wanting to aid me at every step.

In the Name of God, then, I enter upon the Narrow Path which leads to sanctity, walking bravely on in imitation of my Jesus Who is by my side carrying His cross. To imitate Him and make my life resemble His in some small degree, will be my life's work, that so I may be worthy to die for Him.

Thank You, O my God, for all the graces of this retreat, above all for bringing me at last to Your sacred feet. Grant me grace to keep these resolutions and never to forget my determination to strive might and main to become *a saint.*

13 Nov., 1907.

Hoc unusquisque persuasum habeat: tantum se in studiis spiritualibus promoturum esse, quantum ab amore sui ipsius et proprii commodi affectione sese abstraxerit.—St. Ignatius.[21]

[20] The end is come.—*Ezech.* 7. 2.

[21] "Let each be convinced that he will make progress in all spiritual matters in proportion as he has divested himself of his own self-love, his

A. M. D. G.

RESOLUTIONS OF LONG RETREAT, 1907

1. I must remember that I have offered myself for the Congo. I may be sent now at any moment, and then I shall have only a very short time to live.

2. Is my life all that the life of a future missioner, and perhaps martyr, should be?

3. My ideal: the Third Degree of Humility in all its perfection.

4. My great devotion: the Sacred Heart in the Blessed Eucharist.

5. I will say as much of my Office as I can in the chapel.

6. Each day, if possible, 1,000 ejaculations, but never less than 500.

7. Each day 30 little acts of mortification, if I can, but always never less than 15.

8. The object of my life to be close union with and intense love of God. To acquire this I will (*a*) fly from the shadow of sin, never deliberately break a rule, custom or regulation; (*b*) do each little action purely for the love of Jesus, with exquisite exactness, fervour and devotedness; (*c*) beg constantly and earnestly for a great increase of love.

9. I will try and bear little sufferings without seeking relief.

10. Never to give way to sleep during the day.

11. Great attention to the Rules of Modesty, especially custody of the eyes.

12. To read these resolutions once a week.

Motto: *"Agere contra"*—all for the love of Jesus and to win His love.

Feast of St. Stanislaus, 1907.

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own will and self-interest."—*Spiritual Exercises* (end of second week). Compare the *Imitation of Christ* (i. 25, 11): *Tantum proficies quantum tibi ipsi vim intuleris.*

Chapter V

APOSTOLATE

(1.) MISSIONS AND RETREATS

AT the end of his tertianship Fr. Doyle was once more placed on the teaching staff of Belvedere College. Next year (1909) he was appointed Minister at Belvedere. While he faithfully discharged the duties of teaching or of business administration assigned to him by obedience, his heart was clearly in the retreats which he gave during the vacations and in the odds and ends of missionary work which came his way.

"I have had a very pleasant year at Belvedere," he writes to his sister in June, 1909, "it was my first year in the ministry as a priest, hence the work though hard was consoling. I often thank God for sending me to Dublin, for there one has so many opportunities of doing good and helping poor souls. Indeed if I could have accepted all the work offered to me, I am afraid little would have been done at Belvedere; but all the same I managed to get in a fair share of retreats and sermons, not to speak of some thousands of confessions. In spite of it all I really have never felt better, so you need not be afraid of my 'doing too much' as you call it."

"At long last I am a little less busy—I wonder am I?" he writes four months later. "The good Father Rector has just been in to ask me to look after the Plays for Xmas, which is a job, as you know. However you have been good to me so I must find time for a little chat. I hope you will not mind a typed letter as I am such a slow writer with the pen and I want to say a lot of things to my little sister.

"I would have answered your letter before only for the past two weeks I have been just run off my legs. I had

left the preparation of my sermon over till this month and was counting on a nice quiet fortnight when a Father got sick and I was asked to give the retreat for him at the X Convent to the Children of Mary. By the way I am becoming quite a specialist in this line, I have had so many retreats lately. In fact I know almost all the good girls in town by this, and a few of the queer ones too! It is consoling work and I find a great deal of good can be done among them, though, at the same time, it is hard work to give a talk in the morning, rush back to class all day and then preach for an hour in the evening again, to say nothing of the confessions. I find it hard to refuse to give these retreats I have had such strange experiences at all of them, in fact sometimes I imagine the guardian angels come in to the box first and whisper questions to be asked. Another consoling thing is that many of the girls induce their young men to come up here to confession, if they have been long away, so I am able to catch two kinds of birds. One poor fellow said to me recently: 'Father, I want to straighten things out for I have peace neither with God nor *woman*. Since your retreat she has given me a time of it and says she will not let me alone till I come up and see you.' This was a little hint I gave the girls.

"You can see, therefore, that I am kept busy. I often have to laugh when I settle down to a quiet bit of work, for my whistle at the speaking tube never seems to stop. The strangest collection of queer characters seem to come here and I as the Minister have to see them. Impostors, beggars and sad cases of all kinds. I am glad of it, for here again much good can be done, and somehow, God keeps sending me a few shillings now and again, and this wins their hearts. I think I told you before how grateful I feel to the good God for putting me in Dublin. There are so many openings for a priest which he would not get, say, down at Clongowes. I know you have told me before that I ought not to do too much and so get knocked up, but how can one keep quiet when one sees so much to be done, sin of all kinds to be prevented and souls to be saved? Is it not better even to

shorten one's life a little if needs be in doing good than to become 'blue mouldy' through idleness? But the strange thing of all is that in spite of my hard work—or is it because of it?—I have never felt better or stronger or in finer form than now. Give me credit for a little bit of common sense and ask God to send me more work for Him."

Next year (1910) God sent him more work, when his superiors appointed him to the mission staff, of which he remained an active member until November, 1915. These were years of incessant work which resulted in an abundant harvest of souls. Altogether (from 1908 to 1915) Fr. Doyle gave 152 missions and retreats. He had many of the natural gifts which go to make a successful missioner: an impressive appearance, a clear vibrant voice, considerable fluency, great earnestness, painstaking preparation and indomitable energy. Outside the pulpit he was even more successful. His breadth of view and his patient sympathy made him an ideal confessor, and during missions his confessional was always besieged. As a "slummer" and beater-up of hard cases he had few equals. He loved to hunt out the most hardened and neglected sinners and to bring them back with him to the church for confession. In one city he used during his mission to go down to the quays at midnight to meet ships due to arrive, and to induce the crews to promise attendance or even to go to confession at once. And next morning he was out before six o'clock on the same apostolic errand, waylaying factory girls and mill-hands going to work.

Though Fr. Doyle thus brought to his missionary work considerable natural talents and intense earnestness and self-sacrifice, he did not consider that the results he achieved were explicable save by the action of God's grace. "Candidly," he once wrote to his sister, "candidly, I have not much ability or talents. Superiors know that; and it was a hard struggle enough to get through my studies. But perhaps for that very reason and because God knows I have no cause for getting proud or attributing any success to myself or my efforts, He seems to take a delight in blessing all I do. . . . I really feel like a spoiled petted child, and sometimes it frightens me

not a little. Well, I suppose the good God knows what He is about, but I do not." As the following extracts will show, he refers in several of his letters to the success of his missions in terms which make it clear that he regarded their efficacy as supernatural.

"My success here," he writes, "has far surpassed anything I looked for. But it is, of course, the work of God's grace. I do not think I could possibly find food for vainglory in anything I have done, no more than an organ-grinder prides himself on the beautiful music he produces by turning a handle. God knows I only wish and seek His greater glory, and to make others love Him, if I cannot love Him myself. All along I felt it was all His doing, and that I was just a mere instrument in His hands, and a wretched one at that. All through I had the feeling that I was like an old bucket full of holes, which broke the poor Lord's Heart as He tried to carry His precious grace into the hearts of His children."

"I think Jesus was pleased with our work here. He certainly showed it on Sunday when I asked Him to give me in honour of His Blessed Mother all the souls I intended to visit that day. They all gave in to His grace, including several who had not been to the sacraments for very many years. People say it is hard to love God. I only wish they could realise how much He loves them and wishes their salvation and happiness."

"I have come back from the missions with feelings of joy and gratitude, for these last three missions have been blessed in a wonderful way. God seems to take a special delight in seconding my efforts, just because I have hurt Him so much in the past and have been so really ungrateful. It is one of the big humiliations of my life and makes me thoroughly ashamed of myself that our Blessed Lord for His own wise ends conceals my shortcomings from others and allows me to do a little good. But He does not hide the wretched state of my soul from myself. I am not speaking in a false humble strain, but serious truth. If you, or anyone else, could only see the way I have acted towards Jesus all my life, you would turn away from me in disgust."

"I have had much consolation in my work recently. The last mission was the hardest I have given, yet it seems to have been singularly blessed. All this love and goodness on the part of Jesus only fills me with a deep sorrow that I can do so little for Him. I am getting afraid of Him, just because He is so generous to me and blesses all I do. I feel ashamed when people praise me for my work, the sort of shame a piano might feel if someone complimented it on the beautiful melody that came from its keys. I am realising more and more that all success is entirely God's work, and that self does not count at all. I have this strange feeling that when I get to heaven I shall have little merit for anything I have done for God's glory, since all has been the work of His hands."

This attribution of success to God's grace did not, of course, in the least imply that he neglected such natural factors as reading, preparation, delivery, and hard work. "In whatever he undertook concerning the service of our Lord," says Ribadeneyra of S. Ignatius,[1] "he employed all human means to ensure success, with such care and attention as if (he considered) that success depended thereon; and he confided in God and depended on His divine providence as if all the human means he took were of no effect." In the ordinary affairs of life, such as the acquisition of knowledge, the natural means are paramount, and it would be contrary to God's general providence to attempt to substitute supernatural means therefor. We have seen in a previous chapter how strongly Ignatius insists on this.[2] But in spiritual ministrations, undertaken after an ample period of study, the Society considers spiritual and supernatural means as the most efficacious and essential. "Although human means,"

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[1] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 466. The version given in *Selectae S. Patris Nostri Ignatii Sententiae* (*Thesaurus Spiritualis S.J.*, Bruges 1897, p. 604) is certainly wrong and hardly makes sense: "So confide in God as if success depended altogether on yourself and not at all on God; yet apply every effort as if everything were to be done by God and nothing by you."

[2] So in a letter (1548) to S. Francis Borgia (while Duke of Gandia), Ignatius bids him transfer to study half the time devoted to prayer, because "not only infused but also acquired knowledge will always be very necessary and useful." —*Epistolae*, 2 (1904) 234.

says the 14th Rule for Missions, "are not only not to be despised, but to be employed prudently and religiously when necessary, yet we must especially use divine means, more appropriate to our Institute, and rather rely on them." "All those who have joined the Society," the Constitutions (*p.* 10, *n.* 2) tells us, "must devote themselves to the study of solid and perfect virtues and spiritual things, and regard these as more important than learning or other natural and human gifts; for they are the interior graces whence efficacy should flow to the exterior works."

Fr. Doyle's emphasis on the efficacy of prayer shows clearly that he took this high supernatural view of his ministry. He considered it the duty of all, especially religious, to be missioners and apostles through their prayers.[3] "Pray for all," he once wrote, "but especially for sinners, and in particular for those sins are most painful to His Sacred Heart. With great earnestness recommend to His mercy the poor souls who are in their agony. What a dreadful hour, an hour tremendously decisive, is the hour of our death! Surround with your love these souls going to appear before God, and defend them by your prayers." In his mission-work he relied greatly on prayers, for which he was constantly ap-

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[3] Compare the saying attributed to S. Francis of Assisi in the *Mirror of Perfection* (ch. 4., Eng. trans. by Countess De La Warr, 1902, p. 106): Great preachers "have in truth done no more than to act as instruments of those by whom the Lord has really gathered in this harvest; and those whom they believe to have edified and converted by reason of their preaching, the Lord has edified and converted by reason of the prayers and tears of holy, poor, humble and simple friars." "I realise more clearly every day," writes S. Teresa in 1576 to Fr. Gracian, "what are the effects of prayer and what a soul ought to be in God's sight if it prays for the salvation of others for the sake of the divine glory alone. Really I believe that the object of founding these convents is being fulfilled; that is, that God should be petitioned to help those who toil for his honour and service, since we women are good for nothing ourselves."—*Letters,* Eng. trans. by Benedictines of Stanbrook, 2 (1921) 168. "Let us ask some of these souls from God. Let us offer Him all that we shall do to-day for these souls. Let us ask of God as many souls as we shall take steps in the monastery, utter words in the Office, put our hands into the wash-tub or draw our needles in sewing." "She often desired the novices to offer the blood of Christ for sinners and thought it a sweet thing to make this offering fifty times a day. She would rise at midnight and go before the Blessed Sacrament to ask with floods of tears for the conversion of sinners."—Cepari, *Life of S. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi,* ch. 49, Eng. trans. 1849, pp. 251, 253.

pealing to individuals as well as to convents and schools.[4] "I cannot tell you," he writes, "how grateful I am for your offering of Masses and prayers. It is what I call my 'ammunition' for the missions, which will mean the capture of many a poor sinner. If only you knew what a help and encouragement it is, I think you would be well rewarded and perhaps more anxious to aid the 'toilers in the vineyard,' who depend on prayer to bless their work and make it fruitful." "Pray for a hard case here," "A little prayer for a big fish of forty years whom I hope to land to-morrow," "Get all the prayers you can, even an aspiration may save a soul"—these and suchlike requests occur constantly in his letters. "I am going to say a special Mass in future," he wrote (30th April, 1911), "on the first Sunday of each month for all those who pray for my missions and retreats. I shall be grateful if you would kindly make this known." [5] And again on the Feast of Corpus Christi, 1913—he had been hearing confessions on the day before from half-past five in the morning until eleven at night: "I wish nuns could know the miracles their prayers work during missions in the hearts of poor sinners years away from God; it would make them do so much more." "I think," he once said, "there are too many *workers* in most religious houses, but not half enough *toilers on their knees.*"

He did not confine himself to asking prayers of others, he also toiled on his own knees. During a mission or retreat he sought to increase and intensify his own prayer instead of curtailing it. "The more I have to do," he once wrote, "the greater I feel the need of prayer, so that between the

[4] "He was untiring in begging the prayers of others—especially the prayers of contemplatives, children and the poor—for all his enterprises."—McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.*, 1924, p. 208.

[5] During a mission in Cork he offered prizes in a school to the children who prayed most, and gave them to the little ones himself at the close of the mission. There was, of course no personal element in this desire for success. "I want you to pray much during the coming mission," he wrote before going to Newry, "that God may bless the work of the Fathers who accompany me at my expense, that I may fail in every way if they succeed. I feel that, if someone were sacrificed, God would draw more glory from the mission."

two the poor sleep has a bad time." After an arduous day's work in pulpit and confessional he would often spend a good part of the night before the Tabernacle, cutting his sleep down to three or four hours. Thus during a mission in Drogheda the curate observed that Fr. Doyle on emerging from his confessional at eleven o'clock at night used to retire to the little oratory and remain on his knees before the Blessed Sacrament until the clock struck two; yet he was always up and out of the house before any one else was astir. On another occasion, during the mission in Newry, the curate, receiving a sick-call one night, went into the chapel which was dark; there he stumbled over the prostrate form of Fr. Doyle, who was evidently spending the night in prayer.

Not only in theory, then, but also in practice, he was "convinced that all work for God must in the main be barren without holiness" and that "the want of prayer" was "the weak spot in most priestly lives." He would have agreed with the Ven. Louis Marie Baudouin,[6] that "a man of prayer does more for the salvation of souls in one week than another could accomplish in a whole year"; or with the Ven. Claude de la Colombière,[7] that "if there are so few conversions among Christians, it is because there are so few who pray though there are many who preach." Père de Ravignan [8] expressed Fr. Doyle's thought when he said: "There is no more powerful means for converting souls than prayer—intimate familiar burning prayer, which moves and bends God's mercy towards the sinner for whose return you are asking. Interior souls, souls of prayer, save their brothers of disorder, even without suspecting it. A word prepared during prayer enters, penetrates, gains a soul."

Fr. Doyle was quite alive to the ordinary human prudential arguments against nocturnal prayer, especially during such exhausting and prolonged work as mission-giving involved.

[6] *Life* by P. Michaud, Eng. trans. 1914, p. 62.
[7] *Lights in Prayer*, Eng. trans. 1914, p. 195.
[8] *Entretiens et pensées sur la vie spirituelle*, Paris 1859 [2], p. 268, Cf. Exhortatio ad clerum catholicum (4 Aug. 1908) of Pope Pius X.—*Actes de S.S. Pie X*, Paris (Bonne Presse), vi. 34.

But in his own case he felt that he was responding to a higher call; and his belief was justified by results.[9] "I learnt a valuable lesson lately," he writes on the 20th June, 1912. "I was thinking what I should do during the Novena of the Sacred Heart when the thought came to me to make the Holy Hour each night. But human prudence pointed to several good reasons why this was foolishness. The mission had begun; I was in bad form, dead tired and badly needing sleep, besides feeling anything but well; then there was an early rise and a long drive before Mass. The Holy Hour each night in such circumstances seemed out of the question. But did not Jesus ask for it? It seemed to me He did and that He would help me. And I was not mistaken. The result of the first night was that I found myself fresh and vigorous next day, all weariness and pain had vanished; and during those nine days I never felt better."

Fr. Doyle taxed his health still further by combining penance with prayer. "Mission-time for me," he tells us in one of his letters, "is nearly always a time of intense suffering, spiritually and physically. However, I have noticed that with the suffering there usually come special graces for others or myself." He felt, like Fr. de la Colombière,[10] that "the life of an apostle requires great mortification; . . . a man who refrains from pleasure and who labours incessantly to repress his passions speaks with much more authority and makes a much deeper impression." In this matter Fr. Doyle was probably influenced by the Blessed Curé of Ars, who "often passed several days together without taking any nourishment whatever when he desired to obtain some special

[9] A friar who kept watch on S. Dominic tells us that "standing at one time and groaning heavily or with his face down upon the church pavement, he prolonged his prayer until sleep overcame him. Then starting up he would visit each altar in turn and so kept on until midnight, when he would softly visit the sleeping brethren and cover them up when he saw fit."—Gerard de Fracheto, *Vitae Fratrum* i. 18 (Eng. trans., Newcastle-on-Tyne, 1896, p. 59). We read of frequent night prayer in the case of S. Francis Xavier (*Brou, S. François Xavier*, Paris 1922 [2], i. 203, 356, 418; ii. 207, 278, 282); M. Olier (Thompson, *Life of Jean Jacques Olier*, 1886[2], p. 228); Ven. Balthasar Alvarez (De La Puente, *Vida del V. P. Belthasar Alvarez* ii. 2, Madrid 1920[2], p. 15.); and very many others.

[10] *Lights in Prayer*, (Quarterly Series), 1914, p. 143.

grace for himself or his parishioners, to make reparation for some scandal which had wrung his heart, or to do penance for some grievous sinner whom he judged too weak in courage or in contrition to perform it for himself." A parish priest one day complained to the Curé that he could not touch the hearts of the people. "You have prayed," replied the Curé of Ars, "you have sighed, you have wept. But have you fasted? have you watched? have you slept on the ground? have you taken the discipline?" [11] Such an answer of blunt gospel literalism as Fr. Doyle might have given.

Few, at any rate, have believed so literally and simply that the devil is cast out only by prayer and fasting. It is important to observe that his efforts at self-conquest as well as his humanly foolish self-imposed sufferings were nearly all undertaken in reparation for the sins of others and to merit for them the grace of repentance. They were, in the strict sense, social and apostolic; in fact, as we shall see later, he regarded his sufferings as his special vocation and life-long mission. "A strong light in prayer," he writes in his diary (25th November, 1911), "that since souls are so very dear to God, no sacrifice should be too much to save them. Every little victory over self helps." On the other hand, many, if not most, of his seemingly excessive penances were undertaken, under what he believed to be a divine inspiration, for the help of souls. Thus he one day felt an interior urging to do some severe penance to win the conversion of a poor priest whom our Lord was sending to him. He took a discipline with thorns; in the evening the priest-penitent turned up. Again, here is his account of how he spent the night during his mission in Glasgow, when in addition he was suffering from a cold:

"I made the Holy Hour prostrate on the marble flags, and by moving from time to time I continued to get the

[11] Monnin, *Life of the Blessed Curé d'Ars*, Eng. trans. (Burns and Oates) no date, pp. 111, 241. Cf. Bull of Canonisation of S. Clement Mary Hofbauer (20 May 1909): "He used every effort to bring sinners to penance and confession. . . . He sought this from God through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin and the saints; to obtain this he afflicted his body."—*Actes de S.S. Pie X*, Paris (Bonne Press), vi. 205.

full benefit of the cold. Then for two hours I made the Stations of the Cross, standing, kneeling, and prostrate, taking fourteen strokes of the discipline at each Station. For the rest of the night I remained kneeling before the Tabernacle, at intervals with arms outstretched, till I could bear the agony of this no longer." [12]

The man who acted thus was no sickly or morbid solitary. He was a healthy, good-humoured, broad-minded, hard-working missioner, "with no damned nonsense about him," as one penitent expressed it. But in his soul there were chords attuned to finer spiritual symphonies than our dull wits can discern. He knew, not by theoretic reasoning but by intuition and experience, that there is a mysterious law governing the movements of spiritual energy, a divine economy in the operations of grace. Souls are won by prayer and suffering; God wishes the deficit of sin to be filled up with the overflow of chosen souls. Men sometimes reason about this and call it learned names. Fr. Doyle *lived* it. He gave to his missions not only lip-service, but the devotion of his whole being. Like his divine Master he could say, "For them do I sanctify myself." (*S. John* 17. 19.) He strove to help others out of the spontaneous redundancy of his own spiritual life.[13] Whatever he said to others passed first through his own heart and therein it gained something deeper and more soul-stirring than any natural fluency or learning could impart.

This was Fr. Doyle's own view; in his mind personal

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[12] While thus intimately communing with his Master before the Tabernacle, Fr. Doyle received great graces and many important lights. In particular, he was inspired to make acts of resignation in preparation for a coming cross. His mother died shortly afterwards.—See page 1, note. According to S. Gertrude (*Legatus divinae pietatis*, ii 16) our Lord enjoined her to pray with arms extended. In a note to the French translation (*Le héraut de l'amour divin*, Tours-Paris, new ed. 1921, ii. 83) we are told that "the custom of praying with the arms extended is to-day rather common amongst the Catholics of the Rhine provinces, especially with the object of honouring the five wounds of our Lord." This custom (cros-figil) was common in ancient Ireland.—Gougaud, "La prière les bras en croix," *Rassegna Gregoriana* 7 (1908) 343–354. Compare S. Bernard's *Life of S. Malachi*, iii. 16 (10): "How often did he spend entire nights in vigil, holding out his hands in prayer!"

[13] "My brethren," says S. Bernard (Sermon 18 on the Canticle of Canticles), "if you are wise, you will make yourselves to be reservoirs rather than conduits."

holiness was the basis of soul-saving. Here are his comments on a little incident which occurred during his mission in Drogheda in 1913. "What I look on as a grace," he relates, "was told to me yesterday. A little child speaking of the missioners here said: 'I like Fr. Doyle best because he is holy.' The words cut me like a knife and wound round and round my soul till I could have cried with the pain of it. And this because of the loving compassion of Jesus who covers over my wretched faults and failings and magnifies in people's eyes the tiny good I do, misleading them when He cannot deceive me; and then because that little sentence contained a lifetime of pleading on the part of Jesus for holiness from me as an infallible means of drawing souls to Him. As long as I can remember He has kept that one idea before me; it is ever ringing in my ear; it comes to me at times with overpowering force, but never with such a thunderclap as when He sent an innocent child to tell me what He has said so often, that it is not learning or eloquence or any other natural gift which will do His work, but that holiness alone will open the way to every heart and lead all captive to His feet."

Whether we take his own view of his lack of coöperation with grace or whether we regard him as redolent of holiness, there is no doubt that Fr. Doyle possessed an extraordinary influence such as we usually attribute to prophets or saints. Grace indeed seemed to go out from him. "I have not met a single refusal to come to the mission or to confession so far during my missionary career," he once wrote in a confidential letter. "Why should there be one because Jesus for some mysterious reason seems to delight in using perhaps the most wretched of all His priests as the channel of His grace? When I go to see a hard hopeless case, I cannot describe what happens exactly, but I seem to be able to lift up my heart like a cup and pour grace and the love of God upon that poor soul. I can *see* the result instantly, almost like the melting of snow." It would almost seem as if the exerting of spiritual influence were a sensible phenomenon to the writer of such lines.

This outflowing of grace was also sensible to others. Here is an extract from a letter of an officer who met Fr. Doyle when he was an army chaplain:

"You need not worry any longer about my poor soul, as you call it. I came across a Jesuit, a Fr. Willie Doyle, out here, and he settled up my accounts with the Lord. Fr. Doyle is a splendid fellow. He is so brave and cheery. He has a wonderful influence over others and can do what he likes with the men. I was out the other evening with a brother officer, and met him. After a few words, I said: 'This is a pal of mine, Padre; he is a Protestant, but I think he would like your blessing.' Fr. Doyle looked at my chum for a moment with a smile and then made the sign of the cross on his forehead. When he had passed on, my pal said: 'That is a holy man. Did you see the way he looked at me? It went right through me. And when he crossed my forehead I felt such an extraordinary sensation.' "

There are many other instances of his influence, apart from those already recorded for his first missionary efforts at Aberdeen and Yarmouth. Once, while giving a mission in a seaport town, he came across a retired sea-captain who had not practised his religion for years. All efforts to induce him to attend the mission and to go to the sacraments seemed fruitless. Fr. Doyle visited him day by day but found him growing more sullen and obstinate. One afternoon the missioner called as usual; but no sooner had he entered the sitting-room than the captain jumped to his feet and, seizing a large knife that lay on the table, rushed at his unwelcome visitor, shouting, "I'll make an end of you and your annoyance." Fr. Doyle took a step forward and presented his breast for the blow, calmly looking his assailant in the face. The infuriated man hesitated; his arm dropped nervelessly to his side, and he immediately said in a broken voice: "Father, you've won; I'll go to confession to you." [14]

[14] A rather exciting experience, which similarly proved Father Doyle's cool courage and probably his influence, occurred in April 1915, while he was giving a mission in Carrick-on-Shannon. "I was leaving the pulpit at the end of the rosary," he writes, "when a man suddenly went out of his mind and made a dash for the side-chapel, where some seventy schoolgirls were

Fr. Doyle himself, in a letter to his sister, describes two other instances of sudden conversion which occurred during his mission in 1911:

"During the course of the mission I heard, by accident, of two men who had been away forty years and fifty-two years from their duties. One was a hopeless, the other a desperate case, upon whom missioner after missioner had tried his hand in vain. They were so bad that the priests of the town did not even mention them among the people to look up—it was only waste of time, they said. Clearly no ordinary course of action would do here; and so our Lord, having, as I said accidentally made the poor souls known to me, put the following thought into my head. I went to the Blessed Sacrament and had a straight talk with the Sacred Heart. 'Look here, dear Lord, You have promised to give priests the power of touching the hardest hearts. I am going to take You literally at Your word, to put You on your trial. If You will soften these two 'hard nuts' I will never doubt this promise again. Remember now You are on your trial for nothing will convert them except a miracle of grace.' Somehow I felt that the battle was already won, and that, though the Sacred Heart was going to give me the happiness of reconciling these poor souls, the work of conversion was to be all His. I set off with great confidence to visit number one, an old Papal Zouave, but I was not prepared for what followed. I had been told that he had no faith, etc., etc. To my question if he were attending the mission came the startling answer, 'Father, for the past few days I have been thinking seriously of it.' 'Will you come to confession?' I asked, for I saw it was now or never. 'I will' he replied. I shook hands and left him for I was more moved than he was. After the sermon I heard confessions

sitting; needless to say, they were terrified and they fled like a swarm of black ants all over the sanctuary. I went for him as quickly as I could. When I got near him, he cried 'Now I have you' and in an instant threw his arms around me. I did not know what was going to happen as his wild eyes looked into mine; but he bent down and began to kiss me before the whole church! I got him away quietly, fortunately without any panic, though things might have been very serious if the people had not been singing the hymn."

and waited for X, but no X came, as I half expected. Dinner hour next day saw us together again. 'I kept my word, Father, I was at the sermon, but fear seized my heart and I ran out of the Chapel.' Poor fellow, I felt for him but he had to face the music. 'Come now,' I said, 'down you go on your marrow bones.' I quickly ran him through his confession, gave him absolution and left the old fellow sobbing like a child, with sorrow and joy, beside his bed. Some one else's eyes were not dry either, and I asked myself which of the two had received the greater grace. Next morning X made his Easter Duty before the 1,700 men who filled the church. That evening when I came out to preach I found my friend X sitting prominently inside the altar rails, which had been reserved for the 'quality,' glorious in his Sunday best, with a flaming red tie and a flower in his button-hole. It was his own idea of reparation, and an acceptable one, was it not, to the loving and merciful Heart of Jesus.

"I need not say that this visible sign of God's goodness gave me great courage and confidence in tackling number two, and I wanted it judging from what I had heard. I went down one night to his house and was met at the door by a sour, cranky, crabbed old man who made no secret of the fact that I was a most unwelcome visitor—I was not wanted and the sooner I took my departure the better. In fear and trembling I got in somehow, he leaving the door wide open that I might lose no time in departing. I sat down uninvited, my friend stood and glared at me, snorting. The very helplessness of my case appealed to me, for I felt that all human power was out of the question here and that even the Sacred Heart had a hard task to face in tackling this beauty. I found he was a well-read man, who had travelled a good deal as an iron worker and had lived for a long time in—of all places in the world—Sheffield! I was at home at once.[15] We talked Sheffield for an hour; and though he did not sit down, I saw he was thawing, for 'Sir' was now added to his laconic 'Yes' and 'No,' which eventually reached 'Your

[15] Father Doyle's brother-in-law, Mr. Frank Whelan, lived in Sheffield. See p. 8.

Reverence' once. As I left him, for of course there was no word about religion this time, he actually said 'God bless you,'—his first prayer, I suppose, for years. I went home glad, thinking I had done well. How little I suspected that the old boy was also hard at work and that my troubles had not begun.

"I could not get to him till Sunday, the closing day of the mission, which turned out to be his birth-day as he told me afterwards. I found the old man crouching over the fire looking fifty times as black and as fierce as before. What had happened? I had not long to wait. 'You brought me bad luck with your visit,' he cried, 'I went back to my work to find I was sacked for nothing, and I have nothing before me now except starvation or the workhouse.' Then came the usual tirade against God, the rich, etc. My heart sank, for if he was hard before he was hopeless now; and yet I was glad of the change which had taken place, for this would be a real triumph for the Sacred Heart. However, I soon saw that all I said only angered him more, and yet something told me if I let him slip now he might never get the chance of salvation again. Talk about playing a twenty pound salmon in the river, it was nothing to the tussle with that poor soul! It was only when all was over that I realised what a strain it was for I felt perfectly sick.

"I could only say one prayer 'Lord, You are on Your trial, remember Your promise.' To be honest I was nearly in despair for it seemed I was only doing more harm than good. He was becoming more insulting and openly told me to leave him alone. 'You are not the first,' he sneered, 'who has tried this game, and you won't succeed where the others have failed. I have made up my mind, it is too late to change now; I will die as I have lived. I know as well as you do that I shall go to hell, but that is my business and does not concern you; leave me alone.' It was the darkest hour.

"I could only think of the promise of the Sacred Heart—'I will give priests the power of moving the hardest hearts'—and this was a hard one God knows. 'Lord, remember your promise,' was all I could say, for the devil was working

might and main and knew I was leaving in the morning. Suddenly grace struck him; he turned to me and said quietly 'I will tell you what has kept me out of the Church so long.' He had magnified the importance of a trifling thing and had pictured all sorts of obligations which he could not face. A few words cleared all that away. 'You have lifted an enormous weight off my mind,' he said. The rest was easy. He promised to come to confession, and though I offered to hear him there and then, he said he would sooner do it like a man and would be at the Church at nine, after the closing of the mission.

"Nine came, half past, and no sign of him, when a girl came up and said, 'Mr. Z has been walking up and down the square opposite for the past half an hour.' It was the last effort of the devil. I went out and took the poor fellow by the arm, when he told me he was absolutely unable to set foot inside the door. Our chat did not last long, the load of fifty years fell from his soul, and Holy Communion in the morning sealed his reconciliation with Almighty God. The Sacred Heart *had* kept His promise."

"Now," concluded Fr. Doyle, "I am afraid you will think all this very egoistical; but it was precisely because I felt and still feel that I had no hand or part in these conversions, except being the happy instrument, that I tell it to you; for it was, from start to finish, the work of our Merciful Saviour."

Testimonies to his success as a missioner are numerous. "The results of your mission," wrote a parish priest, "have exceeded my anticipations and all previous experiences. Indeed the people speak of it with awe, as of a miraculous manifestation and veritable outpouring of grace." "Your retreat here has been a wonderful success," says another letter, "It has completely changed many. People are still talking about it, and better still, living up to its lessons." "I can't tell you," wrote a parish priest after his death, "how we all loved him in Dundalk. The people could never get enough of him, and asked to have him back again and again. I wanted him here when I came, but he was just starting for the

Front." "Father," said a man at the end of a mission, "it was the holiest mission we ever had." [16]

It was, however, in another sphere that Fr. Doyle's influence for good was even more deep and lasting, though the result was not so externally dramatic and humanely conspicuous. Though he accomplished so much on the general missions, he found more congenial work in giving retreats, especially to religious communities. During his first two years on the mission staff he was chiefly engaged in giving retreats to sodalities and religious communities. Here was fruitful soil for the self-denial and penance, the love of God and of perfection, which were his constant themes, and for whose easy attainment he had many plans and holy devices. He made a deep impression wherever he went, and soon he was much sought after. During one summer he received more than forty invitations from religious communities to give them their annual retreat. From the very many testimonies to the good he effected a few typical sentences may be quoted.

"No retreat ever made a deeper impression on the community, or raised the tone of the house to such a high level of spirituality, as that conducted by Fr. Doyle."

"A saintly old lay sister wept the whole retreat tears of joy, saying she had never in her whole forty-five years in religion felt and seen so visibly the effects of grace in herself and others."

"Many said they never realised before what religious life meant, but that now they were going to give God everything."

"Rev. Mother told the Bishop that no retreat for the past forty years had made such an impression."

It is curious to note that in spite of the signal success which crowned his ministry, he was at times subject to intense depression and discouragement. "Such fear, dread and hatred

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[16] This tribute of Father Cullen, written in a private letter (27th August, 1917) is worth recording: "Poor Father Willie Doyle's glorious death came as a great grief to me. Poor fellow, he was ready always; and so he is gone with hands full of works to his long rest on the Sacred Heart which he loved so dearly and worked for so tirelessly."—McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen,* 1924, p. 131.

of the Newry mission came over me," he writes to a friend, "that I was on the point of writing to ask not to be sent, and at the last moment I very nearly telegraphed to say I couldn't possibly travel."

"I went to Moira in the lowest depths of fear and misery. For some time before I had been very ungenerous with God and must have pained Him much. On this account I felt I had no right to count on His help. But Jesus took His revenge by helping me more than ever. Such loving forgiveness of injury makes me feel oh! so ashamed of my meanness."

"You would hardly believe the fierceness of the temptation —the old one—before beginning this mission, the temptation to ask to get off it, in fact to give up the mission life altogether as something almost unbearable. When the work starts the storm subsides somewhat, but honestly I am afraid of myself, that in my weakness I may some day ruin God's work in souls by giving in to what I see in calmer moments to be a temptation."

"For three-quarters of an hour I preached in agony, with the perspiration rolling from every pore. I was not afraid of breaking down before the congregation—that would have been a relief—but the physical effort to utter each word was torture, and the longing, time after time more intense, to come down from the pulpit was almost irresistible. They told me I preached well that night, yet I was quite unnerved, and only God knows what I went through."

"What a battle I went through during these three days! I spoke with ease and confidence during the lectures, but all the rest of the time was simply torture at the thought that I had to speak again—loathing of the work, a resolution made fifty times over that this would be my last retreat or mission, that I could not and would not go on, that I would write to the Provincial, etc., etc." (31st March, 1913.)

Once he even wrote: "I am ending this retreat with the resolution of never giving another." Fortunately it was one of the few resolutions he never kept. Such attacks of dejection are quite intelligible in one of Fr. Doyle's emotional

temperament. Even from the purely natural point of view, his exertion of personal influence on others was an exhausting experience; in all such efforts something, as it were, seems to pass out of one and to enter into one's hearers. It was probably some subconscious perception of this which made him so often in anticipation shrink from the ordeal. But he never gave way to this discouragement and repugnance. He worked till the end as a valiant soldier of Christ, laying aside all thoughts of personal predilection and considerations of ease. He crowded his mission years with unremitting toil, as if in premonition of an early death. *Consummatus in brevi, explevit tempora multa.*[17]

And how did he himself view his work? What was his basic motive? Surely not to gain the plaudits of men, nor yet to have the thrill of wielding influence and power. Nor did he work just to save his soul and to amass treasure in heaven. Neither was he simply a kind of social reformer and public moralist. Such aims are plainly too inadequate and superficial to account for Fr. Doyle's heroic self-immolation and whole-hearted enthusiasm. "Were there no reward and no heaven," he asks, "would it not be recompense enough to make one soul know and love Him better? I ask no other reward." "My intense desire and longing," he once wrote, "is to make others love Jesus and to draw them to His Sacred Heart. Recently at Mass I have found myself at the *Dominus Vobiscum* opening my arms wide with the intention of embracing every soul present and drawing them in spite of themselves into that Heart which longs for their love. 'Compel them to come in,' Jesus said. Yes, compel them to dive into that abyss of love. Sometimes, I might say nearly always, when speaking to people I am seized with an extraordinary desire to draw their hearts to God. I could go down on my knees before them and beg them to be pure and holy, so strong do I feel the longing of Jesus for sanctity in everyone, and since I may not do this, I try to do what I find hard to describe in words—to pour out of my heart any grace or

[17] "Being made perfect in a short space, he fulfilled a long time."—*Wisdom* 4, 13.

love of God there may be in it, and then with all the force of my will to draw their hearts into that of Jesus."

To draw men's hearts into the Heart of Jesus. This was the object and inspiration of Fr. Doyle's labours in the pulpit, in the confessional, on the battlefield.

(2.) RETREATS FOR THE WORKERS

It is a tribute to Fr. Doyle's broadminded character and manysided interests that he not only devoted himself to giving retreats to religious and priests, but was also a warm advocate—indeed, as far as Ireland is concerned, a pioneer propagandist—of retreats for working men and women. He had seen for himself the great good effected by such retreats in France and Belgium and also, since 1908, in England. He became convinced that in Ireland, too, such a work was of great social and religious urgency. Though in his lifetime he failed to overcome the forces of conservative inaction and apathy, the seed which he sowed will surely in the near future germinate into a fruitful apostolate. The question is by no means, as many at the time fancied, a mere fad or an unnecessary spiritual luxury. The provision of workers' retreats might conceivably have been a matter of argument a few years ago; to-day it is clearly an immediately imperative step, if the Church is to acquire or to retain its influence over democracy, restive, newly awakened and determined.[18] There are already in Ireland several religious houses where middle-class lay men and women can make a retreat either singly or in groups. Will it be said that it is the purely material difficulty which is allowed to debar Irish workers from similar facilities? If we admit that an annual retreat is necessary for priests and religious, and that occasional or periodical retreats are extremely advantageous to Catholic lay folk, why should any economic or social differentiation exist? The mission or

[18] On the social results of retreats see Fr. Plater's *Retreats for the People* (1912), ch. 13. Even in the lifetime of Ignatius the building of a house of retreats was proposed by Francis de Villanueva S.J. (†1557).—*Exerc. Spirit.*, Madrid 1919, pp. 1182 f.

public retreat, during which people live their ordinary life and pursue their usual work while attending some extra sermons, is an altogether different matter. What is here in question is strictly and literally a retreat; a withdrawal, however brief, from the scenes and cares and routine of daily life; an opportunity, were it only for a week-end, of realising Christ's message and ideal in prayerful silence and with full leisure of soul. The Spiritual Exercises are a serious and a sacred task demanding wholehearted attention and devotion; they are deprived of their efficacy and influence if they are reduced to mere interludes before and after a day filled with toil and trouble and talk. St. Ignatius is insistent on the observance of the "Additions," some of which may seem rather minute to us—such as the exclusion of light during the serious sombre meditations of the First Week—but which altogether constitute a very necessary spiritual environment. It is indeed the lesson of our Lord Himself: the soil must be prepared for the seed. How often does the seed fall amid brambles! Many is the one "that heareth the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choketh up the word, and he becometh fruitless." (*S. Matthew* 13, 22.) Preparation for seed-sowing is as necessary in soul-culture as it is in agriculture.

There is ample evidence that a retreat, filling a man's whole life for a few days amid pleasant and spiritually refreshing surroundings, makes a far deeper and more lasting impression than a public mission during which a man lives and works as usual, perhaps in the midst of squalor, noise and misery.

"Only those who have witnessed the retreats (says Fr. Plater [19]) can have any idea of the wonderful miracles of grace which they normally effect. The men—plain workmen for the most part—enter on the retreat with some bewilderment and even apprehension. Some are merely awkward, others almost defiant. Ringleaders of infidelity have been known to come out of curiosity, the only condition required of them being that they should keep the rules of the house.

[19] In his pamphlet *Retreats for Workers* (C.T.S. London) p. 13.

But on the second day a change is seen on the faces of all. They are very much in earnest—hopeful and courageous, and for the most part as simple and docile as children. It is touching to hear their expressions of gratitude for the benefits which they have received from their retreat, which all are sorry to quit at the end of three days."

"There is a vast difference," remarks Fr. Doyle in his own little pamphlet,[20] "between the methods employed and the fruit resulting from a mission and a retreat. The one makes its influence felt only at certain hours in the evening, the other at every hour; the first uses a few well-known means of moving the heart, the other employs every act of the day, all directed towards one definite end; in the mission it is the preacher who does the work, in a retreat the exercitant himself. . . . The efficacy of a retreat consists in personal reflection, favoured by the absence of all distracting occupations and the logical sequence of subjects treated. Solitude, silence and serious reflection, united to fervent prayer, act powerfully upon the soul and cause it to experience sentiments hitherto unknown. . . . It appeals not to the indifferent crowd, the careless liver, but to the élite, to those who by their intelligence or influence are capable of leading others by their example. It seeks first for the upright and virtuous, the men of character and zeal, and not content with making them better Christians, more solicitous about their own salvation, strives to mould them into lay apostles."

Fr. Doyle did not profess to be an expert social reformer, he had no panacea to advocate for curing the ills of society. But he made a contribution which sprang from the depths of his own inner experience. He realized that the social problem cannot be stated as a duel between profits and wages, that democracy cannot be built merely on increased comfort and amusement. And so he uttered his plea, unfortunately premature, that the ideals of the workers should be raised and purified and strengthened by contact with Christ, the divine

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[20] *Retreats for Workingmen: Why not in Ireland?* (Dublin, Irish Messenger Office, July, 1909) pp. 8f. It is worth observing that this plea for *retreats* was penned by a successful *missioner.*

Workman of Nazareth. He knew that every toiler is a person, not a mere "hand" or chattel, an immortal soul for whom Christ died. Having himself tasted the Saviour's banquet, he proposed to "go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city and bring hither the poor and the feeble and the blind and the lame." "When thou makest a dinner or a supper," said our Lord—and are not His words as applicable to a spiritual as to a material feast?—"call not thy friends nor thy brethren nor thy kinsmen nor thy neighbours who are rich. . . . But call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind." It is these, after all, who have most need of spiritual experience and help, these who, even in Catholic Ireland, live with stunted souls and impoverished bodies in hovels and tenements and garrets. Surely, for Fr. Doyle's outspoken invitation, we may say that "recompense shall be made him at the resurrection of the just." (*S. Luke* 14. 12–21.)

His first attempt to focus public attention on the subject was the issue of a pamphlet, in July, 1909, entitled "Retreats for Workingmen: Why not in Ireland?" While it was in the press he wrote to his sister. "You know," he writes, "I am very anxious to see these retreats started in Ireland, for I believe they would do a world of good and be the means of checking the dreadful irreligious spirit which is beginning to creep in even here in holy Ireland, especially among our uneducated men. I am hoping this little pamphlet may be the means of starting the good work; at least it will help to do so by giving people an idea of what has been done in other countries. I am very grateful to you all for your good prayers; you must ask St. Joseph to find a suitable house now, for I feel if a start were once made all would be well."

"This little book has a history," he tells his sister when sending her a copy. "For some time back I have been studying the question of retreats for workmen. But last year when I saw in Belgium the wonderful good brought about by them and had an opportunity of seeing some of the houses where these retreats are given, I made up my mind to try to do something here in Ireland. . . . My next discovery was that few people over here knew anything about these retreats and

less of the immense good they had already done. I set to work to get all the prayers I could, and really they have been heard, for very many difficulties with regard to this little book have been overcome. I am hopeful it will do much towards bringing about the starting in Ireland of workingmen's retreats. In case you should not know it, I would point out to you that the most important page is the top of the back cover." [21]

Three months later he wrote again full of hope: "You ask me in your letter about the Retreats for Workmen. I have nothing but good news to give you. The blessing of God is certainly on the work. You remember what led me to write the little book, my bargain with our Lord that if this project was pleasing to Him (for I had been thinking of it for years) He would station me in Dublin when I returned from the Tertianship, for naturally the start would have to be made there. At the time I was positive that there was no chance whatever of this happening, for many reasons; what was my amazement to hear that I was to come to Belvedere. I kept my promise of trying to start these retreats by bringing out the pamphlet. I told you the effort it cost me; I see now that the Old Boy had a hand in that, for the little book has set people talking and thinking, and it is only a question of a short time till the first retreat will be given.

"I said the blessing of God was on the work. First of all He has raised up ardent supporters amid the S.J.'s, the chief of whom is Fr. J. McDonnell, the editor of the Messenger, who published the pamphlet for me and is writing up the project in the Messenger. Then the workingmen themselves are showing a keen interest in the proposal. A short time ago a deputation from Guinness's Brewery came to see me, saying they had seen the 'Retreats for Workingmen,' and wanted to know when a start would be made. They promised to send 50 for the first retreat from their department alone, and assured me that hundreds more would follow. They expressed

[21] On this we read: "What can I do? (1) Pray that God may provide the means to establish retreats for workingmen. (2) Distribute copies of this pamphlet among the men of your district."

their willingness to pay anything for the privilege of making a retreat such as described and said, if the Archbishop would give permission, they would beg from door to door for money to build a house of retreats: 'We would work our fingers down to the bone to get money for this.'

"Best of all, only yesterday a gentleman of this city promised a donation of £2,000 to start the work. He had just read the book and was so delighted with the idea he resolved to make this generous donation. (At present this is private: you may speak of it in general terms but do not go into details). Is not this encouraging? and is not God good? No doubt this seems a large sum, but it only means an income of about £40 a year, so you must pray on for more benefactors. The rent of a suitable house would come to £150 or £200 a year, for we would require bed rooms for about 25 men, a chapel, dining room, etc., and good grounds. I have my eye on just what is needed. An old Dublin mansion, just outside the city and on the tram line; fully 25 bed rooms or rooms which could be divided, a splendid room for a chapel, a dining hall, sitting room for wet days and eight acres of garden well laid out. It is nearly ideal in size and situation, is actually in the market, only the owner wants too high a rent. You must simply storm Heaven to soften his heart, and get the little ones to do the same. You may perhaps think I exaggerate when I say that if once these retreats are established they will do an amount of good which will surpass all expectations. It would seem to be the divinely appointed new remedy for a new evil, the falling away of the working classes from all religion and the spread of Socialism." [22]

His efforts, however, were destined to have no immediate success, in spite of the fact that he had a warm supporter in his Provincial (Fr. William Delany) who, in the autumn of 1912, sent him to the Continent to investigate.[23] Fr. Doyle

[22] The intending donor was the late Mr. Lanigan of Dublin, who unfortunately died before a start could be made. The old Dublin mansion was a building in Sandymount which had been used as a Protestant school.

[23] Father Plater's first inspiration to start the work in England came to him during a visit to Belgium in August, 1903.—Martindale, *Charles D. Plater, S.J.*, 1922, p. 61.

inspected many retreat-houses for workingmen in France, Belgium and Holland, and thus gained valuable information and experience. A letter written just before his departure shows Fr. Doyle in a despondent mood, but animated with the hope that other hands would bring his project to success; which is what actually happened. "As regards the House of Retreats," he writes, "I am quite indifferent whether I have a share in it or not. I have prayed for years that my own work might be a failure, if only that of others might succeed and God be thereby more glorified. Surely in His glorious work self should have no part. Hence I tell Him to do just as He pleases with me and with all I try to do for Him. All the same, the continued disappointments over the retreats have been harder to bear than even you imagine."

He left rather suddenly. After giving a mission at O'Callaghan's Mills, Co. Clare, he "packed his bag and fled the country, leaving no address lest they should discover another retreat for him!" "I have come to the conclusion," he says, "that I have earned a little holiday; for during the past two years I have given over sixty missions and retreats, almost continuously, and that begins to tell." He did not confine himself to investigations into continental retreat houses. "As a matter of fact," he adds, "the recently published book of Fr. Plater contains all the information I want; but, you know, obedience is the Jesuit's motto; so I am going to take my little trip all the same!" His two months' trip—he had to be back at Newry on 1st December for a week's mission in the Cathedral—consisted rather in a change of work than in recreation. Besides his visits to various houses of retreat and long discussions with Père Watrigant, S.J., the scholarly expert on the Spiritual Exercises, he "put in a good month's hard work" at improving his knowledge of French "as it is very useful for retreats and confession work." He also found opportunities for his own spiritual advancement, as is shown by the following letter, which may be quoted more for its personal interest than for its relevancy to the question of retreats.

"I have picked up an immense amount of useful information about Workingmen's Retreats since I came here. Every-

Rathfarnham Castle and House of Retreats (at the right).

The Pond, Rathfarnham Castle

body has been kindness itself and helped me in every way. Indeed this trip has been, and will be, of great service to me and God's work. More than once the Hand of God was plainly visible in little incidents which may eventually lead to big things, the missing of a train bringing about the chance meeting of one who gave me great help, and so in other ways. When leaving Ireland I did not think my journey was to mean so much for myself spiritually. At Lourdes, at Tours, at Angers, and other places, our dearest Lord seemed to have had His message prepared and waiting for me. I had a feeling all along that my visit to Lisieux would do much for me, and I was not mistaken; so that I am coming home like a bee laden with the honey of God, which I pray Him not to allow me to squander or misuse. I saw many interesting places and things during my weeks of travel. But over all hung a big cloud of sadness, for I realised as I never did before how utterly the world has forgotten Jesus except to hate and outrage Him, the fearful, heart-rending amount of sin visible on all sides, and the vast work for souls that lies before us priests. My feelings at times are more than I can describe. The longing to make up to our dear Lord for all He is suffering is overwhelming, and I ask Him, since somehow my own heart seems indifferent to His pleading, to give me the power to do much and very much to console Him."

In spite of the information thus acquired and the subsequent propaganda in which he engaged, funds remained inadequate and public opinion seemed unmoved. Once, indeed, he was very near success. He was sent for by the Provincial who told him that a suitable residence and grounds had been offered and that he was to take charge of the first Retreat House for Workers in Ireland. A few days later the house destined for retreats was burnt down by suffragettes! And thus the project fell through.

Even to the end, however, Fr. Doyle did not lose hope; in the midst of apathy and discouragement he kept watching every chance and opportunity. "I did not write," he tells Fr. Plater (20th May, 1913), "because I had nothing but disappointment, opposition, cold shower-baths and crosses

to chronicle, the last and biggest cross being the sudden death of my truest supporter, Fr. J. Walsh. Your news about the success in England is glorious, and yet I am assured that mine will come in Dublin if ever a house is opened. . . . I am confident the real difficulty will be to keep the men out. I never realised till I got on the mission staff the immense amount of faith and love for holy things there is everywhere still in Ireland. . . . It has been a four years' Calvary, but yesterday the Resurrection, I hope, began, for I heard that Rathfarnham Castle with 53 acres has been purchased at last, and I have the Provincial's promise (when that took place) to allow me to make a start *in the stables*. Ye Gods! Fancy the mighty Doyle preaching in a stable! Very like the Master is it not?" [24]

"We corresponded much on the subject of workers' retreats," says the late Fr. Plater of his Irish colleague. "His quick imagination pictured the immense good which might be effected by their introduction into Ireland. With his whole soul he threw himself into the work of promoting them. His letters are just himself—ardent, enthusiastic, full of piety and love of country. He would, I am convinced, gladly have given his life to see the retreats established in Ireland. He was acutely distressed because others could not see what he saw so plainly."

"He found it hard to be patient with those who urged expense as an insuperable obstacle, for he knew that once a start was made the money would come. The Island of Saints would not allow a School for Saints to suffer through lack of funds. Again, it was objected that Ireland had not a large class of well-paid artisans, who, it was supposed, must form the bulk of the retreatants; and here, too, Willie Doyle saw that the objection was groundless as the history of popular retreats had shown. 'Why not in Ireland?' was the sub-title

[24] We can gauge his continued interest in the project from this entry in his diary (20 Dec., 1914): "During a visit to —— Church I felt urged to promise our Blessed Lady to try and give up meat on Saturdays in her honour, if she in return will bring about the starting of the Workingmen's Retreats this summer (1915)."

of his excellent pamphlet on Retreats for Workers, and his challenging question was really unanswerable.

"There is only one possible memorial to Fr. William Doyle, and that is a house of retreats for workers in Ireland. That he would have asked for; indeed, we may be sure that he *does* ask for it. Those to whom his life of smiles and tears and his glorious death have been an inspiration will surely help him to get it."

Since the first issue of this book this memorial to Fr. Doyle, for such we may call it, has been erected. A Retreat House, to accommodate about forty exercitants, has been constructed over the quaint medieval outbuildings of Rathfarnham Castle which had been used as stables. Since its formal opening on the 11th March, 1921, the Retreat House, so beautifully situated next the Jesuit Juniorate in the suburbs of Dublin, has been the centre and power-station for a much-needed lay apostolate. Social workers, members of sodalities, workingmen, civic guards, schoolboys, have made retreats at Rathfarnham. There are still serious financial difficulties; above all there is even yet a great lack of appreciation of the spiritual and social importance of the work. But the work for which Fr. Doyle "would have given his life," perhaps did give his life, has been started. It is the duty of Catholic Ireland to see that, with God's blessing, it is maintained and extended.[25]

In spite of this failure to secure the erection of a retreat house during his lifetime, Fr. Doyle had the happiness of putting his views to one practical test. After many delays and difficulties it was arranged that he should give a three days' retreat to the employees of the Providence Woollen Mills, Foxford, Co. Mayo. Holy Saturday (3rd April, 1915) was selected as the opening day, so that the triduum could include

25. Two pamphlets by Rev. R. S. Devane, S.J.—*Week-end Retreats* (1922) and *The Romance of Retreats in Ireland* (1924)—give an account of the work which has already been done. A German pamphlet has been published in appreciation of Fr. Doyle's efforts for workers' retreats: *P. W. Doyle, S.J., ein Vorkämpfer der Arbeiter-Exerzitien in Irland,* 1923, Leutesdorf am Rhein.

the Monday Bank Holiday, on which day alone the School would be closed and the schoolrooms available. The men did not at all appreciate the idea beforehand, they were nervous and uneasy at the novel proposal, and kept wondering "what they were in for." The general tone was, "Really this is too much of a good thing, hadn't we a (public) retreat in the parish a few months ago?" Only the mill-workers (and also a few outsiders, Pioneers) were invited; and, of course, they were left perfectly free to come or not as they pleased. Naturally there was some anxiety about the attendance, but to the relief of the good Sisters of Charity, a large number turned up for the first lecture.[26] Each man got a typed copy of the order of time. The day was well filled, only small intervals being left free. Mass was at eight o'clock, there were four instructions, two or three visits to the Blessed Sacrament, the Stations of the Cross, a couple of rosaries, and some spiritual reading. The Senior School which is bright and spacious made a very devotional oratory, the lower rooms being free for reading or smoking. The convent garden was placed at the exercitants' disposal, and it was edifying to see them walking about singly or in silent groups. The rosary was said out of doors and was very impressive, the men walking in procession followed by Fr. Doyle, who recited the prayers aloud. The brass instruments of the Mill Band accompanied the Benediction Service and Hymns, in singing which the whole congregation joined.

Almost from the very start the men gave evident signs that they had lost all their awkwardness or suspiciousness, they quickly entered into the peace and calm of this unwonted spiritual atmosphere. "No man ever made such an impression," writes one of the exercitants. "Fr. Doyle's saintly appearance and attractive manner at once captured our attention, and time passed so quickly while he spoke that each lecture, though invariably half an hour, seemed but a moment.

[26] Of the 62 men then employed in the Mills 60 made the retreat; these were joined by five others who petitioned the favour. Since 1915 an enclosed retreat for the mill-workers has been held every second year.

His words were simple and clear, and delivered in so kindly and gentle a fashion that they were just what he liked to call them—'little chats.' We had been accustomed to fiery threatening sermons at missions, where God's justice is painted with so much eloquence, making one tremble at the uncertainty of salvation. But here the words of the saintly preacher sent us away with the impression: 'How easy it is after all for me to save my soul! God is good, He loves me, and what He asks is very small.'" One lecture on Reparation to the Sacred Heart made an abiding impression on the hearers. The outrages and insults heaped on Christ throughout the world were vividly depicted by one who had seen them nigh, and were consolingly contrasted with the religious mission of Ireland, whereof every Irish Catholic worker ought to be the watchful custodian.

At the close of the retreat, on Easter Tuesday morning, all the men went to Mass and Holy Communion, listened to a farewell lecture, assisted at Benediction and received the Papal Blessing. Fr. Doyle then shook hands with each man as he left the room, and by this simple friendly act captured the last corner of every heart. The typical comment was, "It was entirely too short; if only we had another day!" Those best entitled to judge state that the retreat will never be forgotten, and are confident that the good then accomplished will not be undone.[27]

The success of this retreat shows clearly the deep spiritual influence which a House of Retreats in or near Dublin can exert on our Catholic workers, who at present often find anti-Catholic influences far more accessible. But from this Foxford experiment we may draw another, and perhaps even

[27] Fr. Doyle had originally proposed that the Sisters should provide board and lodging for the exercitants, but on becoming acquainted with the local circumstances he agreed that this was unnecessary. The men live close by, with very little in their surroundings to distract them; and they are accustomed to the bell summoning them to and from their meals. The full work-time lost on the retreat was 1¼ days (Monday and portion of Tuesday). The men were paid for this time, though they were not told this beforehand; the loss of wages was also made up to the women who were necessarily idle while the Mill was closed.

more practical, inference. That is, the possibility of having, throughout the country, retreats for working men and women, without the necessity of providing special retreat-houses at all. Just as the Sisters at Foxford provided facilities for their workers in their school and convent, just as the clergy themselves make their annual retreat in some diocesan college or vacant seminary, so, we begin to realise, could schools while idle in vacation time, or similar institutions with available space, be utilised for providing occasional retreats for our less fortunate brothers and sisters who toil in fields and factories and live in hovels and slums. We have provided for our friends, our brethren, our kinsmen, and our neighbours who are rich. "And the Lord said: Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that My house may be filled." (*S. Luke* 14. 23.)

The appeal of Fr. Doyle's experience, as recorded in this biography, has already stimulated several English convents to take up the work of retreats for workers during the time of the school-vacation. Thus in 1920 Fr. Plater was asked by the Canonesses Regular of the Holy Sepulchre to give a retreat for workers in their Convent at New Hall, Chelmsford. Though supposed to be undergoing a rest-cure he consented, "hoping that Willie Doyle would help him through." He afterwards published [28] a short account of the retreat, from which a few extracts may be given. "The idea of organising a retreat for men at New Hall, that historic convent in Essex, was suggested to the community by reading the life of Fr. Doyle, the apostle of retreats for workingmen. The nuns succeeded in collecting twenty-seven men; their ages varied between seventy odd and fourteen. Nearly half of them were Protestant or, perhaps more accurately, nothing in particular." The retreat lasted from Saturday afternoon to the following Monday night. "The men arrived at the convent at 8 a. m. on the Sunday and Monday mornings and went home at 9 p. m. on the three evenings. All their meals were taken at the convent and the nuns provided excellent fare. There was a fine large recreation room where the men

[28] In the *Tablet*, 28th August, 1920.

could smoke. Every part of the glorious grounds was open to them. The meditations were given in the chapel. . . .

"You could only have told which were Catholics and which were not, when it came to Confession and Communion. All listened attentively, all prayed, all sang, all made good resolutions, all received the Pope's blessing, and all agreed with their spokesman that the retreat had been 'an eye-opener.' A visible change came over the faces of all as the retreat proceeded—a growing light and joyousness. . . . The men made real sacrifices to attend. Some gave up a day's wages. The crops clamoured for attention, but the bailiff decided that they must wait. An old man had to look to the cows, but he was there and back as fast as his feet could carry him. Five of the men lived in Chelmsford; the rest in the neighbourhood of the convent, three miles out. It was excellent to hear some of the men saying that the part of the retreat they liked best was the time when they 'turned things over for themselves' after each talk."

This was the work done by one convent amid a very sparse Catholic population; and the retreat has now become an annual fixture at Chelmsford.[29] The only comment to be made is that of the sub-title of Fr. Doyle's pamphlet—Why not in Ireland?

(3.) THE HOLY CHILDHOOD

From the notes of his Long Retreat it is already clear that Fr. Doyle more than once volunteered for the foreign mission.[30] His wish was never gratified, unless perhaps we can regard as a foreign mission that last ministry fulfilled amid scenes of savagery mingled with heroism. But he remained

[29] Father Martindale gave the retreat in 1921. A short account is given in the *Tablet* for 13th August, 1921.

[30] See p. 53. He was so confident that he would be sent to the Congo, that he procured a catechism in the native language and interleaved it with an English translation. The book is the Kikongo translation of "The New Testament, or The Things Done and Taught by our Lord Jesus Christ," by Rev. R. Butaye, S.J. This little souvenir still survives as a proof of his practical and resolute zeal.

to the end intensely interested in the field whither the Lord did not call him to harvest. Often in his retreats [31] did he ask his hearers to think of the great army of pagans which would take thirty-one and a half years to pass, one per second, in single file. Often did he kindle his zeal and increase his reparation at the thought of the sins of so-called Christians and the ignorance of them that sit in darkness. Furthermore, his interest in the foreign missions took a very practical shape, namely, that of helping the Association of the Holy Childhood. This Association, founded in 1843 by Mgr. de Forbin Janson, Bishop of Nancy, has for its object the rescue of children in Africa and Asia, who have been abandoned and left to die by their parents. By this means more than eighteen million little babies have been saved and baptised; most of these neglected mites did not long survive baptism. The members help the work of the Association by their prayers and offerings. Fr. Doyle was able to collect considerable sums by his zealous and ingenious methods. He had attractive cards printed each with a picture of a rescued babe and an invitation to buy a black baby for half-a-crown, the purchaser having the right to select the baptismal name! "I do not know," he wrote from the Front on 31st July, 1916, "if I told you that the Black Baby Crusade, though now partly suspended, proved a great success. I got well over a thousand half-crowns; and as in some places a poor child can be bought for sixpence, there should be a goodly army of woolly black souls now before the throne of God.[32] In addition, two priests, one in Scotland, the other in Australia, have taken up my card-scheme and are working it well. The idea of buying a little godchild from the slavery of the devil and packing it off safe to heaven, appeals to many." Like every other avail-

[31] See also p. 22 of his pamphlet *Shall I be a Priest?* On prayer for the foreign missions see Manna, The Conversion of the Pagan World, Eng. trans. by J. McGlinchey, Boston 1921, ch. 17, pp. 227 ff.

[32] According to the *Annals of the Holy Childhood* (Irish Branch), Nov., 1917, p. 90, Fr. Doyle "collected in a comparatively short time, before leaving Ireland as C.F. at the Front, the large sum of nearly £200 'to buy black babies' for God." An account of the work of the Association of the Holy Childhood will be found in Manna's book just cited, ch. 21, pp. 277 ff.

able method of saving souls, it appealed to Fr. Doyle; and he brought to it his characteristic humour and energy.

(4.) VOCATIONS

Fr. Doyle was naturally interested in helping, encouraging and advising those who desired to work for Christ as priests or religious. This interest he showed by personal direction and correspondence and also by the publication of two simple little pamphlets which have had a phenomenal success. *Vocations,* issued in August 1913, is now (1924) in its 16th edition (160th thousand); *Shall I be a Priest?,* first issued in March 1915, has reached (1924) its 11th edition (80th thousand); both are published by the Irish Messenger Office, Dublin.[33] In the second last letter he ever wrote, sent to his father from the Front, on 25th July, 1917, he gives an interesting account of how he came to write the brochure on Vocations. The letter itself is headed "bits and scraps for an old man's breakfast," it was hastily written in the open air and expressed in good-humoured homely language for a father whom he tenderly loved and who, he knew, was interested in every detail of what he did.

"You will be glad to know, as I was, that the ninth edition (90,000 copies) of my little book *Vocations* is rapidly being exhausted. After my ordination, when I began to be consulted on this important subject, I was struck by the fact that there was nothing one could put into the hands of boys and girls to help them to a decision, except ponderous volumes, which they would scarcely read. Even the little treatise by St. Liguori which Fr. Charles gave me during my first visit to Tullabeg, and which changed the whole current of my thoughts, was out of print. I realized the want for some time; but one evening as I walked back to the train after dining with you, the thought of the absolute necessity

[33] "Vocations" has been translated into German, French, Flemish, Dutch, Polish, Italian, Portuguese, Croatian; "Shall I be a Priest?" into these languages and also into Catalonian and Czecho-Slavonic.

for such a book seized me so strongly, (I could almost point out the exact spot on the road), that there and then I made up my mind *to persuade someone to write it,* for I never dreamt of even attempting the task myself.

"I soon found out that the shortest way to get a thing done is to do it yourself, or rather God in His goodness had determined to make use of me, because I was lacking in the necessary qualifications, to get His work done, for I am firmly convinced that both in *Vocations* and *Shall I be a Priest?* my part consisted in the correction of the proof sheets and in the clawing in of the shower of 'bawbees.'

"I remember well when the MSS.—which does *not* stand for 'Mrs.' as Brother Frank Hegarty read out once in Clongowes: 'St. Jerome went off to Palestine carrying his Missus' —had passed the censors to my great surprise, the venerable manager of the Messenger Office began shaking his head over the prospect of its selling, for as he said with truth, 'It is a subject which appeals to a limited few.' He decided to print 5,000, and hinted I might buy them all myself!

"Then when the pamphlet began to sell and orders to come in fast, I began to entertain the wild hope that by the time I reached the stage of two crutches and a long white beard, I might possibly see the 100,000 mark reached. We are nearly at that now without any pushing or advertising, and I hope the crutches and flowing beard are still a long way off. God is good, is He not? As the second edition came out only in the beginning of 1914 the sale has been extraordinarily rapid.

"It is consoling from time to time to receive letters from convents or religious houses, saying that some novice had come to them chiefly through reading *Vocations;* for undoubtedly there are many splendid soldiers lost to Christ's army for the want of a little help and encouragement. . . . A welcome gift from a benefactor, not a benefactress this time, has just reached me in the shape of a donation of £3 to distribute a thousand free copies of *Vocations.* The donor believes that if one cannot oneself volunteer for the war, the next best thing is to try to get someone else to do so. One never can tell

into what generous heart the good seed may fall, or the number of souls that possibly may be saved by this distribution. May God bless him and send along a thousand more imitators, for 'the harvest is great and the labourers few,' said our Blessed Lord, and He ought to know!"

The success of this unpretentious little pamphlet, written without any affectation of style or erudition, demonstrated very clearly the untold good that can be done by instructive and devotional literature. Fr. Doyle never intended to become an author, and modestly felt that he was not equipped for literary or theological expositions. But as abler men seemed unable to write for ordinary souls or preferred to criticise the ventures of others, he felt it his duty to put down in clear simple language the thoughts and ideals for which he himself lived and worked. And he was more than justified by the spiritual harvest he reaped thereby. Besides the letter just quoted there are in his correspondence many other references to the results of his pamphlet. Thus he writes on one occasion: "I have just had a visit from a 'rich young lady,' a perfect stranger to me, whose eyes have been opened by reading *Vocations*. I have had two or three cases like this recently; which is ample reward for the trouble the book cost me." "My little book on *Vocations*," he says in another letter, "has brought me a good deal of consolation lately. The Superior of X—— told me they had at least two novices whose thoughts had been first directed to religious life by reading the pamphlet and that another, whose vocation was due in great measure to the book, was expected in a few days from Australia. Yesterday I had a letter from the —— Fathers in London telling me several of their young men had been led to take the final step by the same means. Some time ago a Lutheran, recently received into the Church, wrote from New York saying that the pamphlet had appealed to him so much that he was now studying for the priesthood. This is encouraging and proves what I have always held, that there are vocations in abundance if only they were helped a little."

The unexpected success of *Vocations* led Fr. Doyle to write

another pamphlet to which he gave the title *Shall I be a Priest?* It was written with simple direct fervour and would serve equally as a consideration for priests on the dignity of the sacerdotal office or as a help to a diffident aspirant. The frontispiece represents a little child knocking at the tabernacle-door and saying, 'Jesus, I want to be a holy priest.' The appropriateness of all this will be understood from the following letter. "It is not mine but Jesus' alone," he wrote, "for every word seemed to come from the Tabernacle before which I wrote it, the greater part on the altar itself. Nominally it is written for boys, but in reality I have tried to give a message to my fellow-priests, and at the same time to stir up greater love and reverence in the hearts of all who may read it. Its defects are many, because such a subject would require the pen of an archangel. But I feel Jesus will bless the tiny book and make it do His work."

While Fr. Doyle was working with superhuman energy as military chaplain, he kept planning some further pamphlets. Except the titles—Union with God, Letters to One who is Hesitating, Spiritual Communion, An Explanation of the Priest's Actions at Mass—he committed nothing to writing except the following few jottings, hastily scribbled while crouching in some dug-out. As they refer to the subject of vocations, they may be inserted here.

"Vocation Letters.

"1 Escape from world. Christ said 'I pray not for the world.' Eagerness to get away from plague, infected places.

2 Every action, step done for God. Three things in prayer: merit, satisfaction, and impetration.

3 Fear of unhappiness. Bernadette: 'I do not promise to make you happy in this world.' 'Ought not Christ to have suffered?'

4 Joy of sacrifice; when made, great joy after fear.

5 End. 'Well done, good servant.' Real life is to come.

6. 'Could do more good in world.' Many Masses, fasts, works of zeal, sacrifice of will greater than all.

7 Cutting on Pagan Religious Orders; no vocation, yet perseverance; penitents to help.

8 Don Bosco refused 300 foundations for want of subjects (nuns), also Angers.

9 A good religious experiences more pleasure and consolation from a single pious exercise such as Mass, visit to the Blessed Sacrament, than people of the world take . . . (Ven. Fr. Champagnat.)"

Fr. Doyle's interest in vocations was not confined merely to literary advocacy. He was always generously ready with personal advice and assistance. He helped a very large number of girls to enter religious houses and a not inconsiderable number of boys to enter religion or to prepare for the priesthood. Many a visit did he pay to convents, many were the letters he wrote in his efforts to "place" vocations. When Ireland failed, he tried England, and even America, Australia, and South Africa. Once he was satisfied that a true vocation existed, he could not be disheartened by any temporal disabilities.[34] An interesting and ingenious scheme which he started, while on leave from the Front, may be best indicated in his own words (in a letter to his father dated 25 July, 1917):

"I do not know if I have told you of a scheme which I have in my mind to help poor boys who are anxious to be priests. Before the war I came in contact with a number of very respectable lads and young men, whose one desire was to work for God and the salvation of souls, but who, for want of means, were not able to pursue their studies. I was able to help some of them and get them free places in America or England, with a couple at Mungret, but the number of applicants was far in excess of the resources.

[34] He got one girl with a wooden leg and another with a paralysed left hand into American convents. Both are now professed and are doing good work. During his lifetime he was sometimes criticised for being over-eager and imprudent in sending girls into convents. I have been unable to discover any evidence in support of such criticisms.

"One day having successfully negotiated or missed a couple of shells, I was struck instead by a happy idea. I was coming home on leave and made up my mind to make an experiment with my new idea, which was this. I gave a little talk to the Sodality of the Children of Mary in a certain convent in Dublin on the need for priests at the present time, and what a glorious work it was to help even a single lad to become one of the 'Lord's Anointed.' I told them how many were longing for this honour, and suggested that they should *adopt* some poor boy and pay for his education until he was ordained. Two hundred girls subscribing 5/- a year would provide £50, more than enough for the purpose. I suggested that this money ought to be the result of some personal sacrifice, working overtime, making a hat or dress last longer, etc., but as a last resource they might collect the 5/- or some of it.

"The idea was taken up most warmly: nearly all the money for this year is paid in, though the girls are nearly all factory hands, and the lucky boy will begin his college course in September. I am hoping 'when the cruel war is o'er' to get the other convents to follow suit; for the scheme is simple and no great burden on any one, and is a ready solution of the financial difficulty and should bring joy to many a boy's heart. Certain difficulties naturally suggest themselves, but I think we may safely count a little at least on our Blessed Lord's help, since the work is being done for Him, and go on with confidence."

How dear this scheme was to Fr. Doyle may be gathered from this entry in his diary: "May 24th (1917). Feast of Notre Dame Auxiliatrice, who helped Don Bosco so much in his work for young priests. I formally to-day made Mary the Protectress of the work which I am beginning for her young priests." [35]

It will be convenient to mention here Fr. Doyle's translation of the Life of Père Ginhac by A. Calvet, S.J. "Printer after

[35] The work met with several disappointments but it is still continuing. It is not easy to understand why Fr. Doyle did not make his experiment a branch of S. Joseph's Young Priests' Society which has exactly the same object.

printer refused to have anything to do with the book," he wrote, "though I staked Fr. Ginhac's reputation that it would prove a financial success." Finally Messrs. R. and T. Washbourne undertook to produce the work, and it appeared in 1914 as *A Man after God's Own Heart: Life of Father Paul Ginhac, S.J.* When Fr. Doyle heard that the price was fixed at 8/6 net, he thought that the sale was killed, for "not many people would care to invest such a sum in the life of a man no one had ever heard of." But to his astonishment 900 copies went through in the first year, and up to December 1916 altogether 1,244 copies had been sold.[36] "Père Ginhac," he wrote to his father, "has certainly worked this miracle if he never did anything else; and I am beginning to think he is not a bad sort of an old chap, even though he looks so desperately in need of a square meal!" Fr. Ginhac's portrait certainly represents him as cadaverous and grim-visaged, a contrast with his admirer and translator, whose mortified life was never allowed to interfere with his buoyant naturalness and irrepressible spirit of fun. The book seems to have impressed and helped many readers, for Fr. Doyle continues: "I have had a pile of letters from all parts of the world—Alaska, Ceylon, South Africa, etc.—asking for relics and mentioning many favours received through the holy father's intercession; so that the labour of getting out the volume (and it was not light) has brought its own reward." Thus wrote Fr. Doyle a month before his death. Little did he dream that his own life would be written, and that his influence would be mingled with that of his fellow-religious whom he helped to make known to others.

[36] A second impression was called for in 1921. Undoubtedly some of Père Ginhac's views and practices did not appeal to Irish or English readers; and his biography was subjected to criticisms not unlike those afterwards made against Fr. Doyle's own life. "I have the feeling" wrote Fr. Doyle on 30th May, 1915, "that it will bring much humiliation on me in some way, and I have asked our Lord to make it a source of suffering—I think he will. Not a single Rector except my brother has taken notice of my letter. One criticised the title sharply, but sent no subscription. Yesterday at recreation I gave the book to the Superior; he looked at the cover for a moment but did not even open it, and then passed it on like a sod of turf. I am sure our Lord intended that, for he is one of my best friends and the kindest of men."

Chapter VI

THE ASCETIC

(1.) INTRODUCTION

IT is not as a successful missioner nor as a zealous director that Fr. Doyle chiefly merits our attention and study. The main interest of this biography is within, in the inner life of the soul. Exteriorly there was little remarkable in his career. Many another missionary has reaped a more abundant harvest, many other directors have been far more skilled in moral and mystical theology. Doubtless, too, there are in our midst many unrecognized saints whose hidden interior life is precious in the sight of God and would be deemed glorious by men if they but knew it. But it is our good fortune that we can in the case of Fr. Doyle read, at least partially, the record of his true life; we can view his career not only as men saw it, but also as it appeared to God and to himself. And to appreciate his life at its real value we must forget altogether that adventitious halo of earthly glory which lit up its last phase. It is most important for us to avoid placing his war-experience in false perspective or attributing to it an exaggerated importance. Whatever the world may think, his life would have been just as glorious and heroic had he never volunteered to do Christ's work on the battlefield. His life was a spiritual combat, an unseen war against all that is ignoble and evil; it needs not the fame that it won on fields of carnage. His service as a military chaplain did but serve to bring out his latent heroism, it showed to men the virtue which had already been acquired in the quiet of a religious house. Thus Fr. Doyle's life at the Front may well serve to disarm the prejudice of those who otherwise might be tempted to despise the little ups and downs, the prayers and penances, the resolutions and aspirations, which in this case are seen to be the

inner facet of what is outwardly admirable. His work for the soldiers was, of course, wonderfully fruitful; his zealous ministry ended as it began, in Belgium. And one can hardly help feeling that his death was God's answer to his lifelong prayer for martyrdom. Nevertheless, the centre of Fr. Doyle's life is within, and its significance for us is quite independent of its chance relation to human warfare. One great benefit indeed we owe to his military chaplaincy: the fact that he had not an opportunity of destroying his spiritual notes. It is from these precious relics and from a few very intimate letters that we can piece together some of the special characteristics and methods of his spiritual life.

The predominant impression which is left after perusal of these papers is that Fr. Doyle is wonderfully true to type—he is of the race of Jesuit heroes. He has his own particularities, of course, even peculiarities; but he is unmistakably similar to his spiritual forbears. For instance, the Jesuit missionaries of North America were men whose great achievements are written in the annals of civilisation, discovery, and ethnology. They were heroes, who for Christ left the fair land of France and buried themselves in the woods with savage Algonquins and Hurons, eating their coarse sagamite or oftener starving with them, shouldering the same burdens, living in the filth and vermin of their tepees, travelling over snow and ice, meeting not seldom with blasphemy and obscenity. Slow calculated heroism such as this is not a sudden inspiration or a wild access of emotion; it is the outcome of deep purposive thought and painful methodic effort cooperating with grace. The End of Man, the Kingdom of Christ, the Two Standards, . . . slowly step by step does Ignatius train Christ's captains; and slowly, day by day, in humdrum routine and endless trivialities of self-mastery, do his sons develop the souls of heroes. John de Brébeuf, gloriously martyred on 16th March, 1649, used as a novice to declare: "I will be ground to powder rather than break a rule." Only to those who miss the inner key will this seem a curious preparation for foreign mission and martyrdom. Père Enémond Massé († 1646), another pioneer missionary, to prepare himself for

his apostolate in Canada, "whose conversion can be undertaken only by those who have on them the stigmata of the cross," made some resolutions which were found among his papers after death. As they help to reveal the spiritual affinities of Fr. Doyle, they will be here recorded:

"1. Never to sleep except on the bare ground, without sheets or mattress—which however must be kept in the room, so that no one may know what is being done.

2. Not to wear linen except round the neck.

3. Never to say Mass without a hair-shirt, in order to make me think of the sufferings of my Master, of which the Holy Sacrifice is the great memorial.

4. To take the discipline daily.

5. Never to take dinner unless I have first made my examen, and if prevented to eat only a dessert.

6. Never to gratify my taste.

7. To fast three times a week, but so that no one will know it." [1]

Exactly similar detailed resolutions are to be found in nearly every page of Fr. Doyle's notes. The spirituality which was found adequate for the Iroquois and Huron missions was once more tested on the bloodstained fields of France and Flanders.

Fr. Doyle is by no means the only Jesuit whose inner life was first revealed by the posthumous publication of a private diary. This is true even of the Founder himself. "Ignatius recommended the keeping of such journals," says Fr. J. H. Pollen,[2] "and also their destruction rather than letting them fall into the hands of others. This practice he carried out with great regularity; but by a happy foresight a few pages escaped the fire." These pages have been published from the

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[1] T. Campbell, S.J., *Pioneer Priests of North America,* vol. ii. (*Among the Hurons*), p. 59. Fr. Campbell adds: "The eighth is to punish any uncharitable word that might escape his lips. Those lips were made to pay a penalty which we prefer to omit."

[2] *S. Ignatius of Loyola,* New York, 1922, p. 135. "Every day," says Fr. Gonzalez, "he used to write down what happened in his soul."—*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 97.

saint's autograph.[3] The spiritual notebooks of several of Ignatius's companions and of many early members of the Society have also been published; a practice of Jesuit biographies which has continued down to our own day.[4] A comparison of Fr. Doyle's memoranda with the published journals of his fellow-religious makes it abundantly clear that his spirituality is characteristic of the Society of Jesus and cannot be properly appreciated without some explanation, not only of the general principles and traditions of Catholic spiritual life, but in particular of the methods and outlook which we may call Ignatian.

And here, at the outset, before examining the more austere and supernatural aspect of Fr. Doyle's life, we must once more lay stress on an aspect of his character which may seem to be more akin to the Franciscan than to the Jesuit type of holiness. About the saints of the Society there is a certain air of self-restraint and repression; they seem, at least to a superficial analysis, to be so methodic and negative that they lack the freshness and spontaneity of the early friars; they are soldiers rather than troubadours. "What else are the servants of the Lord," asked S. Francis,[5] "but His minstrels to lift up the hearts of men and move them to

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[3] J. J. de la Torre S.J., *Constitutiones Societatis Iesu latinae et hispanicae*, Madrid 1892, appendix 18, pp. 349–363. There is also a German translation (*Aus dem geistlichen Tagebuch des hl. Ignatius von Loyola*, Regensburg 1922) by A. Feder S.J. who says in his introduction (p. 1): "Nothing gives us such a deep insight into the inner life and character of a man as the delineations in his spiritual diary, which were written down without any exterior influence simply and solely for the good of his own soul."

[4] For example: S. Francis Borgia, Jerome Nadal, Bl. Peter Le Fèvre, Bl. Peter Canisius, S. John Berchmans, S. Alphonsus Rodriguez, V. Luis de la Puente, V. Claude de la Colombière, Paul Segneri, V. Bernard de Hoyos, Père de Matignon, Père Olivaint. The surviving fragment of S. Francis Borgia's diary covers about five years of his life. The text is in *S. Franciscus Borgia* (M.H.S.J.) 5 (1911) 729–887. A partial French translation will be found in P. Suau, *Histoire de S. François de Borgia*, Paris 1910, pp. 553–578. "No document," says Père Suau, "throws more light on Borgia's spiritual life at the period when he wrote it" (p. 67 note). S. John Berchmans, says Fr. Martindale, "took notes of literally everything. Not a thought passed through his mind, one would say, but he consigned it to writing; not a resolution, not a scheme, not a like or dislike."—*In God's Army: Christ's Cadets*, 1917², p. 122.

[5] *Mirror of Perfection* ch. 9 (Eng. trans. by Countess de la Warr, 1902, p. 148).

spiritual gladness?" Gladness, spiritual as well as natural, was certainly the most prominent characteristic of Fr. Doyle; and those who have learnt to know him only through the medium of his austerities and aspirations will have a very faulty impression of the man if they allow this unexpected revelation to obscure what a contemporary, already quoted, calls his "heaven-sent gift of a sense of humour." "There was nothing much to distinguish him from other young Jesuits," writes another who knew him in Stonyhurst,[6] "except perhaps that he was more lively and fond of what, for want of a better word, we must call harmless mischief."

Here again is the testimony of one who lived long with Fr. Doyle: "I found the Life very interesting and very wonderful. Certainly I have come across no record of austerities practised on such a scale in recent times. In his early life, until Ordination, I knew Fr. Doyle very well indeed. We were together for two years at Stonyhurst, and I was thrown very much in his company. He was always a very reserved man; it was impossible to know him; he never let you into his secrets, hardly ever, I think, consulted you about anything. It was impossible to be really intimate with him, as one always felt that he would not take you into his confidence. This explains, I think, the fact that people had no conception of the life he led, which would never have been known had not his notes been discovered. In his early life he gave no indication of the sanctity he afterwards attained. He was always, of course, very good; but he was better known for his jokes and freaks than for piety. He was always, however, very determined; and if he set his mind on anything, nothing would deter him from carrying it through. When then, later on, he set himself to become a saint, it is not surprising that he overcame his own inclinations as he had overcome all other obstacles." And Fr. Plater writes: "I lived for some years with big-hearted Willie Doyle and loved him. We were seminarians together and I saw much of him. He was always bubbling over with mirth and generally at the bottom of any harmless mischief that might be afoot, but only the shallow-

[6] *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (London), June 1920, p. 86.

minded could have mistaken his gaiety for thoughtlessness. Underneath his mercurial behaviour were steadily glowing ideals and enthusiasm. He had a deep and simple piety and a burning love for Ireland."

Such are some of the recorded testimonies of contemporaries to the impression made upon them by their fellow-religious. They prove conclusively that Fr. Doyle's asceticism was neither repellent nor gloomy; they show on the contrary that he retained to the end certain qualities which, whether we regard them as lovable human traits in the man or even as persistent uncorrected faults in the religious, are not without interest and consolation for those who shudder at the recital of his achievements in penance and prayer.[7] It may therefore be desirable to give some indications of what has been termed "harmless mischief," though for obvious reasons many of Fr. Doyle's jokes and pranks cannot be set down in cold print. Here are a few typical stories which will serve to give an impression of his humour.

The scene of the first story is Donegal Bay on a summer vacation day. Fr. Doyle was in a small boat with four fellow Scholastics. One of them, sitting in the stern, took out his watch to regulate the time for examen. Just as he said, "We begin now," Fr. Doyle, who was sitting in the bow with a gun in his hand, fired both barrels into the air, shouting "Go!" The oarsmen nearly fell out of the boat with the shock.

While in Clongowes Fr. Doyle came to the conclusion that a brother Scholastic used to appropriate the newspaper too much. So one day he entered the common room and sat down at the fire opposite Mr. X who was absorbed in his paper—

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[7] "High self-denial sometimes hides under an appearance of easy-going good nature and a liking for the humorous side of things."—Joseph Rickaby S.J., *Waters That Go Softly*, 1919[3], p. 91. In his fantasy called *Doomsland* (1923) Mr. Shane Leslie, whose knowledge of Father Doyle is solely derived from a cursory perusal of this biography, thus refers to him under the thin disguise of Fr. Dale (p. 259); "Opposite him sat Father Dale with lines across his fresh brow almost transparent. His set mouth left no loophole either for egress of opinions or entry of delicacies. He pushed aside his butter and ate bread dry with watery lips." Father "Dale" in other words, was dull, unmannerly and uncouth. Mr. Leslie (on p. 364) also speaks of Father "Dale's" "haggard young face"; the accuracy of this expression may be tested by glancing at the frontispiece to this book.

which suddenly burst into flame. Fr. Doyle, having heated the poker, had surreptitiously applied it to the newspaper. The subject of this particular joke resented it; whether justifiably or not must be left to the reader's sense of humour and charity.

While in Milltown Park, Fr. Doyle played several tricks on a certain Father, a very particular old gentleman of the antique school, who, it must be confessed, almost inevitably provoked Fr. Willie's itching for mischief. To anyone acquainted neither with Father Y nor with customs in Milltown Park a recital of these stories would fail to convey meaning or humour; except perhaps Fr. Doyle's exploit while reader at supper. The "Menology" for the day is usually read; this consists of a brief, jejune, and often rather platitudinous, life-sketch of a deceased member of the Society. But this night Fr. Doyle gravely read out an irresistibly apt and humorous obituary of Father Y who was actually present in the refectory. Another little escapade which also occurred in Milltown was not taken well by his Rector. On some feast-day Fr. Willie was going out for a walk when his Superior met him and ordered him to go to his room and to remain there, apparently as a punishment for some fault or other. Fr. Willie of course obeyed; but instead of shutting his door, he piled up chair, table, priedieu, etc., at the entrance and during the evening interviewed and entertained friends and sympathisers from behind the barrier.

Undoubtedly such an act would never have been committed by Fr. Doyle after his tertianship. But even to the very end, though his fun never infringed the borderline of charity or obedience, he loved a practical joke. This will be evident when we come to recount his experiences at the Front. One little incident relating to this time may be given here, as it illustrates his dislike of primness. One day, while home on a short furlough, he was talking to the Juniors in Rathfarnham. He was lounging against the mantelpiece, with his hands deep in his trouser-pockets, military fashion. A simple Junior asked him the meaning of some red patch

or tape on his uniform. "My superior officer gave it to me for good conduct," replied Fr. Doyle blandly.

A biographer is not called upon to appraise such matters. They may have been the exuberance of unreformed nature; they may have been the expression of a deliberate belief in the compatibility of holiness and humour and in the necessity of a little fun to relieve the strain of religious life. "I can find no evidence that there was any malice in any of his practical jokes," writes a contemporary. "They were the overflowing of high spirits, a sort of boyish espièglerie. I cannot see, nor can others to whom I have spoken, how they can be evidence against sanctity. At the worst they might be survivals from a time when life was a less serious thing to him. But seriousness is not portentous gravity and longfacedness. These pranks kept him human and lovable for us, they destroyed the incipient growth of priggishness." [8]

(2.) CATHOLIC ASCETICISM

To many modern minds the word "asceticism" sounds gloomy, cheerless and repellent, and suggests the suppression of personality and initiative; even those non-Catholics who advocate the reality usually avoid the name.[9] Let us remind ourselves, however, not only that Fr. Doyle was "a man who practised, in his own search after holiness, a fervent and at times scarcely sane asceticism, and yet kept with it a most human kindliness, tolerance and whimsical humour towards

[8] Fr. Bernard Vaughan loved a practical joke (Martindale, *Bernard Vaughan, S.J.*, 1923, p. 29). S. Ignatius was once very severe on two lay-brothers who played jokes (by throwing water on one another).—*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 576. But did he not bear patiently with the tricks of Ribadeneyra?

[9] Thus, according to Huxley (*Science and Education*, 1893, p. 86), the man whose "body is the ready servant of his will; . . . whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine; . . . who, *no stunted ascetic,* is full of life and fire, but whose passions are trained to come to heel by a vigorous will, the servant of a tender conscience;" . . . "such a one and no other has had a liberal education." Similarly Dr. Inge, Dean of S. Paul's, while denouncing "asceticism," advocates "self-mastery, which is the reward of frequently thwarting and contradicting the lower self."—*Review of the Churches* 1 (1924) 313.

others";[10] but also that asceticism is merely the Greek for spiritual exercise.[11] "As walking, journeying and running are bodily exercises," says S. Ignatius,[12] "in like manner all methods of preparing and disposing the soul to remove from herself all disorderly attachments, and, after their removal, to seek and find the divine will in the laying out of one's life to the salvation of one's soul, are called spiritual exercises." Thus even to save one's soul, to keep the commandments, a man must be an ascetic.

Asceticism, then, is simply the ordering of one's life in pursuit of an ideal. S. Paul (*I Cor.* 9. 25) pointed to the athletes in the Isthmian games as true ascetics: "Every competitor uses self-restraint in all things; they indeed to gain a crown that fades, we to gain one that is unfading." The successful pursuit of any profession involves such continual exercise—the removal of inordinate attachments, the conquest of inconsistent inclinations, the annulment of customary inhibitions and the release of new ranges of energy. That this natural asceticism is not attainable without a process of slow training, a systematic course of spiritual athletics, to use S. Paul's analogy, is acknowledged by psychologists ancient and modern. Here, for instance, is the advice of Seneca: [13] "Set aside a certain number of days during which you are to be satisfied with the scantiest and cheapest food and with rough coarse dress; and say to yourself, Is it of this I was afraid? For it is in time of immunity from care that the soul is to be prepared for hard things, and it is in a season of good fortune that it should be strengthened against evils. . . . If you would not have a man flinch when the crisis comes, you must train him beforehand."

"The Teacher," writes an eminent non-Catholic professor of pedagogy,[14] "the teacher must show how will-power is built up by a gradual process of practice on the smallest things, and how every act of self-conquest in one sphere of

[10] *Times Literary Supplement*, 8th April, 1920.
[11] The verb *askein* means to exercise.
[12] First Annotation prefixed to the Spiritual Exercises.
[13] *Ad Lucilium* 18. 5 (Ed. Hense, 1914, p. 55).
[14] Foerster, *Marriage and the Sex-Problem*, Eng. trans. 1912, pp. 176 f.

life makes the battle easier in all other spheres." "Such exercises as the following," he suggests, "will be found useful: keeping things tidy, refraining from talking, bodily gymnastics, getting up early in the morning, fasting, doing disagreeable things, carefully speaking the truth, performing drudgery (such as energetically working at a new language) with exactitude."

Finally we may quote the advice of a great American psychologist: "As a final practical maxim, relative to these habits of the will, we may, then, offer something like this: *Keep the faculty of effort alive in you by a little gratuitous exercise every day.* That is, be systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; do every day or two something for no other reason than that you would rather not do it: so that, when the hour of dire need draws nigh, it may find you not unnerved and untrained to stand the test. Asceticism of this sort is like the insurance which a man pays on his house and goods. The tax does him no good at the time, and possibly may never bring him a return. But, if the fire *does* come, his having paid it will be his salvation from ruin. So with the man who has daily inured himself to habits of concentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things. He will stand like a tower when everything rocks round him, and when his softer fellow-mortals are winnowed like chaff in the blast." [15]

As we read over these words, we realise their perfect aptness to Fr. Doyle. He was systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points; every day he did many things for no other reason than that he would rather not do them; so that, when the hour of need and big-scale heroism drew nigh, it did not find him unnerved and untrained to stand the test. For most assuredly he was a man who daily inured himself to habits of contentrated attention, energetic volition, and self-denial in unnecessary things.

As Seneca prescribed, he set aside a certain number of days for serious self-examination and mortification; and, as Professor Foerster recommends, during his period of study and

[15] James, *Principles of Psychology* i. 126. Cf. Dr. J. J. Walsh, *Religion and Health*, Boston 1920, pp. 62, 155, 166.

college work, he built up his will-power by performing drudgery and doing disagreeable things. Whence we may conclude that, even from a purely natural standpoint, the Jesuit system of ascetic training is neither antiquated nor ineffective.

We may even deduce that this system is sounder and truer to life than that advocated by Stoics and psychologists. For it is not true that "every act of self-conquest in one sphere of life makes the battle easier in all other spheres," unless there is continuity of motive and identity of ideal. Without such continuity it is not altogether a matter of indifference in what region the will is exercised. The will may be compared rather to a switch than to a muscle; it needs practice, not to be strengthened, but to become accustomed to certain motives and decisions.[16] The faculty of effort may indeed be kept alive by a little gratuitous daily exercise, but only on condition that this exercise is based on an overmastering motive which persists the self same through all changes of subject-matter. "He that is faithful in what is small," says our Lord (*S. Luke* 16. 10), "is faithful also in what is greater," for it is the same faithfulness—loyalty to a Person—which is shown in both.

It is precisely this emphasis on the moral act of the will, this insistence on the continuous reference to a personal God, which keeps Catholic asceticism fresh and clean and joyous, and enables it to avoid the negative pessimism and morbidity, the petty self-insurance and self-assurance, which tend to characterise the efforts of ascetic naturalism. Christian perfection consists, not in the development of mere hardness and indifference to pain, but in the love of God. "In the spiritual life," says S. Thomas,[17] "the love of God is as the end; whereas fasting, watching, and other bodily exercises are not sought as the end . . . but are employed as necessary means towards the end, *i.e.*, to subdue the concupiscences of the flesh. . . .

[16] J. Lindworsky, S.J., *Der Wille*, Leipzig, 1921², pp. 190 ff. But see the criticism by Father Hatheyer, S.J. in *Zeitschrift für Katholische Theologie* 43 (1919) 747–760.

[17] *Quodl.* 5, a 18. Cf. *Summa Theol.* 2. 2, q 184, a 2: Perfectio vitae christianae in charitate consistit.

Hence such practices are to be used in a reasonable measure, that is, so that concupiscence may be avoided and nature not extinguished. . . . If, however, anyone so weakens his natural strength through fasting, watching and suchlike that it is insufficient for carrying out his duties, . . . he undoubtedly sins." This principle was admitted even when many individuals erred by excess in the first fervour of the solitary and cenobitic life; for we find Cassian writing as follows: "Those things which are of secondary importance—such as fastings, vigils, withdrawal from the world, meditation on Scripture—we ought to practise with a view to our main object, that is, purity of heart which is charity. . . . Whatever then can disturb that purity and peace of mind, even though it may seem useful and valuable, should be avoided as really harmful." [18] Indeed was it not S. Paul himself who declared that almsgiving or even martyrdom availed nothing without charity? [19]

Why then, it may be asked, can we not love God without any asceticism or suffering? Such a question overlooks, among other things, the very real resistance, both internal and external, which every man encounters when he strives effectively to love God; and particularly when he aims at such perfection of charity that he wishes not only to avoid sin but to extirpate faults and to perform heroic deeds. We cannot be good just when we like; we cannot become heroes for the mere wishing. "For the good which I want to do," says the Apostle (*Rom.* 7. 19–24), "I do not; but the evil which I want not to do, that I do. . . . I find then this law: that when I want to do good, evil presents itself. For according to the inner man I delight in the law of God, but in my members I see a different law, which is in conflict with the law of my reason and makes me prisoner to that law of

[18] Collationes i. 7. "Let us not believe that exterior fast from visible food alone can possibly be sufficient for perfection of heart and purity of body, unless there has also been joined therewith a fast of the soul."—Cassian, *De institutis renuntiantium* v. 21. Cf. Benedict XIV: "We should keep in mind that in the spiritual life the love of God is our end, and that fasts and watchings and other bodily exercises are not followed as an end."—*Heroic Virtue*, Eng. trans. 1 (1850) 360.

[19] *I Cor.* 13. 3. Cf. S. Thomas (2 2, q 124, a 3): "To suffer death is not in itself praiseworthy, but only in so far as it is ordered to some good which consists in an act of virtue, e. g. faith or love of God."

sin which is in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who will deliver me from the body leading to this death? The grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Apostle cooperated with this grace by accepting the sufferings sent by God—such as the "skewer in the flesh" (*II Cor.* 12. 7) sent to humble him; by braving cold and hunger, imprisonment and death, in his missionary work; and by undertaking voluntary mortification. Emulating the athletes of the stadium, "I run with no uncertain goal," he says (*I Cor.* 9. 26), "I box—not like a man hitting the air. Rather do I beat my body and lead it about as a slave; lest I, who have heralded others to the contest, should myself be disqualified."

In addition to this argument from ethical psychology, there is another fundamental idea in Christian asceticism—that of satisfaction and merit. For example, according to S. Thomas the three objects of fasting are "(1) to repress the concupiscences of the flesh, (2) to secure that the mind is more freely elevated to sublime contemplation, (3) to satisfy for sins." [20] It is true that, in theory at least, the strictly sufficient and necessary element is satisfaction, is the moral act of the will, the sinner's submission and love; but normally this assumes a penal form. The place of suffering in satisfaction is, therefore, that of being a normal condition always realised in practice; in itself mere suffering, apart from its voluntary acceptance, avails neither for merit nor for satisfaction.[21] The merit and satisfaction of an act are proportional, not to its difficulty or to the suffering involved, but to the love with which it is

[20] 2. 2, q 147, a 1. Cf. *Suppl.* q 13, a 2: Poena satisfactoria est ad duo ordinata: scilicet ed solutionem debiti et ad medicinam pro peccato vitando. S. Ignatius says in the first observation on the tenth Addition of the First Week: "Exterior penances are performed chiefly for three effects—(1) as satisfaction for past sins, (2) to overcome oneself in order that sensuality may obey reason and all the lower parts be more subject to the higher, (3) to seek and find some grace or gift which the person wishes and desires."

[21] S. Thomas (*Suppl.* q 5, a 2) teaches that contrition, if sufficiently intense, is enough. Poena habet vim maxime satisfaciendi ratione charitatis qua homo ipsam sustinet.—*ibid.* q 13, a 2. Passio inquantum huius modi non est meritoria, quia habet principium ab exteriori.—3, q 48, a 1, ad 1. "The guilt is punished by the pain which is endured through the desire, love and contrition of the heart; not by virtue of the pain, but by virtue of the desire of the soul. . . . Suffering satisfies for guilt by perfect contrition, not through the finite pain."—S. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue* (Treatise on Divine Providence), Eng. trans. (Thorold), 1907 [2], p. 31.

performed.[22] Thus nowhere in Catholic theology is there a worship of mere pain as such; there is no preoccupation with suffering, not even by way of antithesis to the modern cult of comfort. Pain, physical and mental, is, in the present order of things, inevitable and medicinal; no ideal of our higher nature can be attained without sacrifice and effort. Christian asceticism is simply the effective translation into individual lives of the self-sacrifice involved in the service of Christ.[23] Whether we invent penances or whether we confine ourselves to the acceptance of those for which God provides endless opportunities, penance we must do, if we wish to deny ourselves, to take up our cross and to follow Christ. The spirit of our time is delicate and squeamish and hypersensitive; the avoidance of pain and discomfort has become a veritable science as well as an industry. Perhaps there is even a tendency to seek anaesthetics in the spiritual life or to look for easy modes of conveyance along the royal road of the cross! But the words of Christ still ring true: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world, keepeth it unto life eternal." (*S. John* 12. 24.)

(3.) LIBERTY OF SPIRIT

It is clear then that Catholic theology regards ascetic and devotional practices merely as means or instruments for obtaining and increasing the love of God. Hence in themselves all such actions are morally indifferent. If in any concrete

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[22] Diminutio poenalitatis ex promptitudine voluntatis, quam facit charitas, non diminuit efficaciam satisfactionis sed auget.—S. Thomas, *Suppl.* q 15, a 1, ad 2. Plus facit ad rationem meriti et virtutis bonum quam difficile; unde non oportet quod omne difficilius sit magis meritorium, sed quod sic est difficilius ut etiam sit melius.—1. 2, q 27, a 8, ad 3.

[23] In so far as there is a common psychological-ethical basis, the practices of Christian and of naturalistic or pagan asceticism may coincide; but the ideal is different. In so far as specifically Christian virtues or beliefs are involved, the practices of a Christian ascetic may also be *sui generis*.

case they are necessary or desirable for the attainment of virtue or perfection, then they are praiseworthy; whereas they are reprehensible in so far as they impede greater good or interfere with higher obligations, or inasmuch as they are self-willed freaks or morbid delusions. "Whatever masters us," says S. Teresa,[24] "in such a way as to make us feel that our reason is not free, should be looked on as suspicious; and we shall never in that way attain to liberty of spirit, one of the characteristics of which is the finding of God in all things and the ability to think of Him in the midst of them." There is such a vice as excessive attachment to practices of devotion, which is as much a perversion of true holiness as the avarice of a miser or the habit of a slave to passion is a misdirection of man's natural desire for happiness; in the supernatural as in the natural life it is possible to mistake the means for the end. But such possibility of misuse must not lead us to condemn the proper use of those helps, expedients and devices whose utility has been proved by general experience. It is true, as Father Faber says,[25] that "no one can be at all acquainted with the old-fashioned Benedictine school of writers without perceiving and admiring the beautiful liberty of spirit which pervades and possesses their whole mind." It is well to remember, however, that such liberty of spirit is not lessened, but rather increased, by the more recent multiplication of devotions and practices designed to help weak human nature in the spiritual combat; for our liberty is the same, and our area of choice is greater. Progress in spiritual psychology is not meant to fetter or to load us but to suggest a greater variety of methods and contrivances and to adapt the pursuit of holiness to every avocation and to every type of character. By

[24] *Foundations* 6. 17. Cf. S. Catherine of Siena: "The works of penance and of other corporal exercises should be observed merely as a means and not as the fundamental affection of the soul."—*Dialogue,* Eng. trans. (Thorold), 1907², p. 56.

[25] *All for Jesus,* ch. 8. sect. 8, new ed. (no date) p. 317. But contrast what Mère Thérèse de Jésus (Xavérine de Maistre) says: "She breathed the incense of prayer in the writings of the great Benedictine, she said, but she failed to find there the sword of sacrifice. And she added—S. Gertrude teaches us to love, not to suffer; and as for myself, I must be a victim in order to be a lover."—*Vie* par l'Abbé Houssaye, Paris 1909⁵, p. 225.

way of reaction against those spiritual writers—and there have been such—who wish to press every soul into one mould, there is nowadays a regrettable tendency to go to the other extreme and to reject summarily, or to mention only apologetically, methods and practices which have been adopted and recommended by experienced masters of the spiritual life.[26]

The choice of means must be guided by the circumstances of each individual life. "Suppose, for example," says the Curé of Ars,[27] "a man who has to earn his bread by his daily labour. It comes into that man's head to do great penances, to pass half his night in prayer. If he is well instructed, he will say: 'No, I must not do that; because I shall not be able to do my duty to-morrow if I do, I shall be sleepy and the least thing will make me impatient; I shall not do half as much work as if I had a night's rest; I must not do this.' " "True devotion," writes S. Francis de Sales,[28] "hinders no one, but rather it perfects everything; and whenever it is out of keeping with any person's legitimate vocation, it must be spurious. . . . It is not merely an error but a heresy to suppose that a devout life is necessarily banished from the soldier's camp, the merchant's shop, the prince's court, or the domestic hearth." [29] Holiness, even perfection, is not confined to any particular state of life; for God can be loved and served everywhere. It would indeed be a sad world if Christian perfection were unattainable by most Christians and

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[26] S. Ignatius, to whom a cast-iron rigidity is often attributed, writes: "Preserve your liberty of spirit everywhere. . . . Always keep your freedom in face of opposite alternatives; let no difficulty make you lose it; never fail in this."—*Selecta Documenta* n. 5—*Epistolae* 12 (1911) 679.

[27] *Life* by A. Monnin, Eng. trans. (no date), p. 102.

[28] *Introduction to the Devout Life* i. 3; Eng. trans. (Richards), 1878, pp. 8 f. The servants at Monthelon said of S. Jane Frances de Chantal after she had come under the direction of S. Francis, "Madame's old confessor had bidden her say her prayers three times a day, and then they were all tired of it; but the new one made her pray all day long, and no one was put out."—Bowles, *Life of S. Jane F. de Chantal*, 1888[3], p. 67.

[29] The state which is, in itself as a state, more perfect is not necessarily more perfect for any given individual. "If a man carefully examines his vocation, and from motives of love of God, of his family, and of humanity, believes that he ought to marry, he is choosing what is *for him* the better state, and he should find peace of mind in this thought."—Mausbach, *Catholic Moral Teaching*, Eng. trans. (Buchanan), New York, 1914, p. 279.

simply a privilege confined to priests and religious. "One person can spin," says Tauler,[30] "another can make shoes. These are all graces worked by the Spirit of God. Were I not a priest and a religious, I would regard it as something great to be able to make shoes and I would gladly earn my bread with my hands." The choice of a state of life, whether it be religion (in the technical sense) or shoemaking, is itself the adoption of a particular means; and all subsequent practices of devotion or asceticism must be in conformity with this primary choice.

Thus in holiness, as in art or literature, there are types, and within those types there is scope for individuality. In our Father's house there are many mansions, and so too in the Church Militant there are diverse and even divergent, though not contradictory, types and schools of sanctity, coextensive with the myriad richness of the human mind. The catalogue of the saints includes King Louis, the Crusader, as well as Simeon Stylites repeating litanies on his pillar, Joan of Arc, the warrior-maiden, the mystic Teresa of Jesus, the verminous beggar Benedict Joseph Labre.[31] Is it not one of the marks of the Church that within the unity of the faith she not only tolerates but fosters variety and diversity? There are many religious orders each with its own speciality and characteristic, many rites and ceremonies, a richness of liturgy, a multitude of devotions; there is room for everyone with tolerance and charity.

But God's providence does not merely classify souls into

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[30] Denifle, *Das geistliche Leben,* Graz 1920[7], pp. 301 f. Cf. the beautiful medieval legend of Our Lady's Tumbler. S. Philip Neri said "that even in the midst of a crowd a man could attend to his perfection, and that neither trade nor labour are of themselves any hindrance to the service of God. Hence though it is true . . . that he sent a great number of his spiritual children into religion, . . . nevertheless his greatest delight and his special desire was that men should make themselves saints in their own homes."—*Life by Bacci,* 1868[2], p. 383.

[31] "While then in one there is found wisdom, in another righteousness, in another patience, in another kindness, in another chastity, in another humility, Christ is at the present time divided, member by member, among all the saints. . . . For, though, our religion has but one end and aim, yet there are different ways by which we approach God."—Cassian, *De institutis renuntiantium* v. 4. "One saint is specially praised for one virtue and another for another."—S. Thomas, *Summa theol.* 1. 2, q 66, a 2, ad 2.

general types or categories. Even the members of the same family or community will differ considerably in mental endowments and physical powers, in spiritual gifts and devotional attractions. "There are diversities of grace, but the same Spirit; . . . and there are diversities of operations, but the same God worketh all in all." (*I Cor.* 12. 4.) God calls each of us individually, not as it were anonymously and in a crowd. "He calleth His own sheep by name." (*S. John* 10. 3.) Each of us has his own individuality, just as each has his own particular mission; through the gates of life and death we all pass one by one. Hence "as we see that there are never found two men perfectly resembling one another in natural gifts, so are there never found any wholly equal in supernatural ones." [32] "He strengthens one man's self-command," says S. Cyril of Jerusalem, "He teaches another how to give alms; another He teaches to fast and discipline himself; another He teaches to despise the things of the body; another He trains for martyrdom; diverse in different men, yet not diverse from Himself." [33] In a true sense, every human soul, however we may classify or label it, is unique; each of us is called to make his own personal and inalienable contribution to what S. Thomas calls "the beauty and perfection of the Church." [34]

Because of this unicity of each one's circumstances, character and vocation, all spiritual writers agree that it is the duty of a director to respect the liberty of each individual soul and to refrain from imposing his own methods on others. "It would be very dangerous," says S. Ignatius,[35] "to try to

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[32] S. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God* ii. 7. Cf. B. John of Avila: "Men's bodies, as you know, are of various temperaments, and there is just as great a dissimilarity in the constitution of their minds, for God bestows very diverse gifts upon different individuals. He does not lead us all by the same path."—*Letters*, Eng. trans. by Benedictines of Stanbrook, 1904, p. 41.

[33] *Catecheses* 16. 12.

[34] [Deus] diversimode suae gratiae dona dispensat ad hoc quod ex diversis gradibus pulchritudo et perfectio ecclesiae consurgat.—1. 2. q 112, a 4.

[35] *Selectae S. Patris Nostri Ignatii Sententiae*, 8. So also, according to Ribadeneyra, he declared that "nothing is more pernicious in spiritual teachers than to seek to govern others by themselves and to think that what is good for them is good for all."—*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 470.

force all to reach perfection by the same road; such a one does not understand how manifold are the gifts of the Holy Spirit." "Spiritual directors," says S. John of the Cross, "are not the chief workers, but rather the Holy Ghost. They are mere instruments for guiding souls by the rule of faith and the law of God, according to the spirit which God gives to each. Their object therefore should be, not to guide souls by a way of their own, suitable for themselves, but to ascertain, if they can, the way by which God Himself is guiding them."[36] Probably no spiritual writer has expressed himself so forcibly on this subject as the Venerable Augustin Baker, O. S. B. "I firmly believe," he says, "that the reason why so many intelligent souls, in religion or in God's Church, fail to advance in spirit is because, . . . either through the fault of the director or of the souls themselves, they pursue one particular method which they have read in a book or which has been pressed upon them by their director, without regard to its suitability to the individual soul. . . . The office of director is not to teach a particular method to the disciple, but to give general instructions by which the soul may get into her interior, and, when she has once got there, observe the divine admonitions and guidance, instead of following the methods of books or opinions of others."[37]

Just as a director who forces his own methods on a penitent to whom they are not adapted is blameworthy and dangerous,

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[36] *Living Flame* iii. 3, 9. S. Philip Neri "would have confessors remember that it is not necessary to lead their penitents along the road by which they themselves have been led; for the director often finds sweetness and devotion in exercises and meditations which would ruin the health of his penitents if he endeavoured to lead them in that way."—*Life* by Bacci, Eng. trans. 1868², p. 380.

[37] *The Inner Life of Dame Gertrude More,* ed. Dom B. *Weld-Blundell,* 1911, ch. 11, p. 73. "This point," he adds, "is of such moment for God's honour and the good of souls that I think a better deed could not be done than to proclaim this doctrine all through God's Church by the pen of some spiritual man who can express himself clearly and skilfully." If Dame More, he says (ch. 13, p. 90) had followed the instructions "to be found in books and in the writings of even the holiest of men, she would not and could not have put them in practice; if she had attempted it, she most certainly would have gone out of her wits or utterly ruined her health and confounded and obscured her soul by it." "A person of more robust constitution," he remarks (ch. 14, p. 94), "could have borne more violent mortifications; but Dame Gertrude must be taken as God made her."

so also the lives of the saints, which some souls exalt into a code of spiritual direction, may be really harmful. The unthinking transference of practices from the lives of others into our own is injurious to spiritual liberty and progress. Fr. Doyle had a great devotion to S. Benedict Joseph Labre, but it never occurred to him to imitate his heroic dirt.[38] When the Church made S. Rose of Lima the patroness of America, it was clearly not intended to encourage American Catholic women to cut off their hair and to disfigure themselves, to wear spiked crowns and chains, or to sleep on broken glass.[39] The saints lived for God, not for us; the vast majority of saints have never been known or canonised; the lives of those who happen to be published are not designed as patterns into which our own lives are to be woven.

The best spiritual writers, including the saints themselves, have always warned readers against any mechanical imitation of their special devotions and practices. "It is not a book proper for everyone to read," wrote Bl. John of Avila to S. Teresa concerning her own Life.[40] "The language requires to be corrected in some places and to be made clearer in others. There are things in it which, though useful to you in your own spiritual life, would not do for everyone to practise; for God guides some souls along extraordinary paths which are not intended for others." "The benefit that we ought and easily may reap from the reading of such

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[38] "Cleanliness, which helps both to health and edification, should be observed by all concerning their persons and everything else."—*Regulae Communes S.J.*, 19. "He was a lover of cleanliness and held dirt in the greatest abhorrence, particularly dirty clothes."—Bacci, *Life of S. Philip Neri*, p. 223. Speaking of the dirt of S. Hilarion, S. Francis de Sales says: "This was rather admirable than imitable in this great saint. We must not indeed be fastidious, but on the other hand we must never disregard cleanliness."—*Spiritual Conferences*, No. 9, trans. Gasquet and Mackey, 1906, p. 150. Which need not prevent us from seeing the spiritual heroism of S. B. J. Labre who for seven years wandered as a scantily-clad, ulcerous, verminous beggar; a useful much-needed protest against the modern superstition that soap-and-water is synonymous with the grace of God.—Aubineau, *The Story of S. Benedict J. Labre*, Dublin 1888, pp. 41, 46, 110.

[39] *Life* by J. B. Feuillet, O. P., Eng. trans. 1873[2], pp. 32, 35, 40.

[40] *Letters*, trans. by Benedictines of Stanbrook, 1904, p. 18. S. Ignatius recommended the lives of the saints for reading during the Second and subsequent Weeks of the Exercises. The Directory (iii. 2) says that the lives should be carefully chosen, e. g. the life of a married saint for married people.

extraordinary practices of others," says the Ven. Augustin Baker,[41] "is to admire God's ways in the conducting of His saints, . . . but no further to imitate them in such things than we may be assured that God directs us by a supernatural light and enables us by an extraordinary grace, yea, and moreover till we have obtained the leave and approbation of a prudent director." To this counsel of a Benedictine we may add the sound and solid advice of a well-known Jesuit writer on the spiritual life: [42] "In aiming at sanctity each individual should consult the peculiar call of grace, and take into consideration the especial duties which God has allotted to him according to his condition in life. The astonishing penance and austerities practised by some saints under the inspiration of divine grace should never be condemned; yet it is essential to attend to the following recommendations:—

"(1) To limit our admiration of these holy excesses within certain bounds, lest they produce too strong an impression on the imagination, and neither to propose to imitate them nor to look on them as an indispensable requisite to sanctity.

"(2) Whether we embrace the practice of great corporal mortification or not, to attach ourselves principally to interior virtues, these being the essence of sanctity, and all the rest a mere appendage which can be separated from the spirit without detriment to either.

"(3) As far as the choice depends on ourselves, to prefer a common life, in order the more perfectly to imitate Jesus Christ, to preserve humility, to guard against pride which loves singularity, and to render virtue attractive to our neighbour instead of prejudicing him against it by presenting it to his view encumbered with almost endless exterior practices."

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[41] *Holy Wisdom* i. 2, 3 (n. 10) ed. Abbot Sweeney, 1876, p. 89. S. Thomas thus comments on the example of S. Paulinus of Nola who sold himself as a slave: "He did this out of the abundance of charity and led by the Spirit of God; as the event proved. . . . Therefore it is not to be regarded as an example; for where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty."—*Suppl.*, q 39, a 3, ad 3.

[42] Père J. N. Grou, S.J., *The Interior of Jesus and Mary*, i. 29; Eng. trans. by S. Frisbee, S.J., 1891, i. 217. Cf. C. Martindale, S. J., *In God's Army: Christ's Cadets*, 1917[2], p. 5. : "There may be that in a saint's life which should not be imitated by anybody; there will rarely be much of it which should be imitated by everybody."

The saints themselves, however extraordinary their own practice, were clear and unanimous in their advice to others. "Dear daughter," writes B. Henry Suso to a Dominican nun, "if your purpose is to order your spiritual life according to my teaching, as was your request to me, cease from all such austerities, for they suit not the weakness of your sex and your well-ordered frame. The dear Jesus did not say, Take *My* cross upon you. But He said to each, Take up *your* cross. You should not seek to imitate the austerity of the ancient fathers nor the severe exercises of your spiritual father. You should only take for yourself a portion of them such as you can practise easily with your infirm body, to the end that sin may die in you and yet your bodily life may not be shortened. . . . Our natures are not all alike and what is suitable for one suits not another. Therefore it must not be thought that, if perchance a man has not practised such great austerities, he will be thereby hindered from arriving at perfection. At the same time, those who are soft and delicate should not despise austerities in others or judge them harshly. Let each look to himself and see what God wants of him, and attend to this, leaving all else." [43]

Hence the attitude of readers towards the present biography may well be that of Fr. James Cullen, a contemporary of Fr. Doyle. "When he reads of the heroic actions of saints, their extravagant mortifications, or their vows to do something beyond ordinary mortals' power," says his biographer,[44] "he records his desire to imitate them, his holy envy of them; but instantly examines whether, in the concrete circumstances of his life and given his own character and duties, such holy follies might not in the end be less conducive to God's glory—a thing infinitely more important than the satisfaction of pious

[43] *Life*, c. 37. Similarly S. John of the Cross told his novices "that they were not to adopt the practices even of the greatest saints if they were not suited to their vocation."—*Life* by D Lewis, 1897², p. 65.

[44] L. McKenna, S.J., *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.*, 1924, p. 226. Cf. *Marie de l'Agnus Dei* by Mme. S S., Eng. trans. by M. P. Hill, S.J., New York 1923 (London 1924), p. 179: "There is one maxim that seems to me very just. I have heard it from others and will give it to you. It is this: It is not wise to take some one or other as a model and to be absolutely bent upon copying him or her in everything. Graces differ as souls differ, and God requires more from some and less from others."

sentiment. Consequently in the matter of health, his charge against himself is not that he takes too much sleep, but that he takes too little, thereby lessening the intensity of his prayer."

In addition to the fact that our characters and circumstances are not necessarily even approximately coincident with those of the saints whose lives we read, there are other considerations which should make us cautious in appropriating their actions or practices. As we shall see, some of these may really be extravagant and exaggerated, others may be due to the special inspiration of the Holy Spirit; while many acts of apparent asceticism may not be such at all. Moreover, the saints shared the views and prejudices of their time and country. For example, the respect for dirt found in some of the older saints was largely due to the erroneous views of contemporary physicians and philosophers.[45] When St. Edmund Rich and his brother were starting for the University of Paris, their saintly mother advised them to fast and gave them two hair-cloths to be worn twice a week. "In true manly fashion," she said to them,[46] "you should seek after the benefits of God, lest the attractions of softness and the touch of tenderness render you effeminate, exciting the lust of the flesh which warreth against the spirit." We may if we please—though the efficacy of the substitution is very debateable[47]—like to think that, were Margaret Rich alive to-day, she would give her undergraduate son a cricket-bat or a pair of boxing-gloves instead of a hair-shirt, or she might prescribe for him a dose of hard work and a course of will-

[45] Bridgett, *Blunders and Forgeries*, 1891 [2], pp. 36 f. S. Teresa kept reproaching herself for her incorrigible love of cleanliness. "I find," she says (*Relations* i. 23), "that I am improved in the matter of that excessive neatness which I used to notice, though not yet wholly freed from it." Fortunately she was never freed from it; on the very day of her death she thanked the nun who was attending her for changing her linen. "For the love of God," she wrote to Fr. Gracian, "will your Paternity ensure cleanliness in the beds and table-linen [of the friars] though it may be more expensive; for the lack of it is terrible."—*Letters*, Eng. trans. 4 (1924) 142.

[46] B. Ward, *S. Edmund, Archbishop of Canterbury*, 1903, p. 17. His mother herself wore a hair-shirt and an iron corselet.—*Ibid.*, p. 4.

[47] "A young man," Père Lacordaire used to say, "must feel the sting of pain, if he would not feel the sting of pleasure."—Chocarne, *The Inner Life of the V. Rev. Père Lacordaire*, Eng. trans. Dublin [1867] p. 397.

training as advocated by Professor Foerster.[48] These are details which vary with time and place; they concern rather individual psychology and racial outlook than the principles or ideals of the spiritual life. The ascetic practices of the fathers of the desert will in general be unsuitable for a twentieth-century missionary priest; the spiritual methods and devotions of a French or Italian saint will often fail to commend themselves as helpful to an American or Irish Catholic. We may apply to the lives of the saints the advice which S. Gregory the Great gave to S. Augustine of Canterbury concerning the liturgies of various countries: "From each church choose what is pious and religious and right; and collecting these as it were into a bundle, deposit them in the minds of the English to be their practice." [49]

But however much the saints may be creatures of their time in details and applications, their lives have for us a perennial value, apart altogether from the doctrine of the communion of saints whereby we can regard them as elder brothers and living intercessors. The true significance of those spiritual heroes whom we call saints lies, not in this or that mode of expression, but in their lives as a whole. They are a concrete proof of the spiritual greatness of man in his age-long struggle with what is of the brute, they represent so many conquests of grace-aided humanity over mere nature. And in every generation such testimonies are needed, for there are always those to whisper in our willing ears that our impulses are unconquerable, that certain virtues are unnatural, and that suffering is the primary evil of life.[50] The

[48] Cited above p. 134.

[49] Gregorius Magnus, *Epistolae* xi. 64: Migne, P. L. 77. 1187. Cf. S. Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Conferences* No. 7 (trans. Gasquet and Mackey 1906, p. 114): S. Anthony "became so great a saint by making use of the example of the holy hermits, taking the abstinence of one, the prayer of another, like a diligent bee, going hither and thither, pilfering and storing up the virtues of the servants of God, to make the honey of sanctity by these holy examples."

[50] Thus even a writer like Paulsen (*System der Ethik* ii. 18) defends celibacy "in so far as it proves, through a great and striking example, that it is possible to master an impulse which so often leads to ruinous excess." "The Protestant manse itself," says Foerster (*Marriage and the Sex-Problem*, ch. 9, Eng. trans. 1912, p. 153), "like every Christian family, is still unconsciously nourished by the spiritual greatness of the institution of celibacy, of the mighty advance against the dominion of the senses which it represents."

soul of a saint is a sacred laboratory wherein once more man's spirituality is tested and his destiny demonstrated. How often was the Parish Priest of Ars seen to display the joy of victory over a vanquished enemy after some especially severe test of endurance! Sometimes he was utterly prostrate, unable even to stand, after a long spell of fasting and work. "Often," says his companion and biographer,[51] "he returned from the church completely exhausted and obliged to sit down because his legs gave way under him. He was then as pleased as a man who has done something really remarkable; he laughed a good hearty laugh, and alternately joked and chided Adam (as he was accustomed to call his body), or he would say, 'Steady, my poor Colon, keep up!' in playful allusion to a drunkard of that name, who was wont thus to apostrophise his recalcitrant legs." Not unlike a schoolboy who has succeeded in some mischievous frolic; or rather, let us say, like a man of science who has succeeded in some new experiment. There is a good deal of truth in an American psychologist's admission, that "Fr. Vianney's asceticism taken in its totality was simply the result of a permanent flood of high spiritual enthusiasm longing to make proof of itself." [52]

Was not this the spirit of Paul when he cried: "Who is there to separate us from the love of the Christ? Will trouble or difficulty or persecution or hunger or nakedness or danger or the sword? . . . Yet amidst all these things we more than conquer through Him who loved us! For I am convinced that neither death nor life . . . nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (*Rom.* 8. 35–39.) So wrote Ignatius of Antioch on his way to martyrdom: [53] "Let there come on me fire, cross, struggle with wild beasts, cutting up, tearing asunder, racking of bones, mangling of limbs, crushing of the whole body, cruel tortures of the devil—if only I attain to Jesus Christ." Ignatius of Loyola, too, even at the beginning of his new life, thought less of expiating his

[51] Monnin, *Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. (Wolferstan), 1924, p. 178.
[52] W. James, *Varieties of Religious Experience,* 1906 [12], p. 304.
[53] *Ad Romanos* 5. 3.

sins or training his character than of proving what he could do and endure for Christ. "He determined to do great penances," he tells us himself,[54] "not so much with the object of satisfying for his sins as to please God. He had so lively a desire to do great things for the love of God that, without deciding that his sins were pardoned, he was hardly mindful of them when he was devising penances to undergo. So whenever he called to mind any penance done by the saints, he proposed to do the same and even more. . . . His entire intention was to do such great exterior works, because the saints had done them for the glory of God." This is not mere asceticism; it is far removed from a meticulous character-training. It is not a calculated course of negative self-repression; it is something positive, defiant and joyous. It is extremism abhorring mediocrity, heroism scorning discretion.

The saints knew, quite as well as their modern critics, the comforting gospel of commonsense, the easy platitudes of pain-shirking sanity. How familiar sounds the temptation which so long assailed B. Henry Suso: [55] "It may be all right that you should amend your life, but do not set about it so impetuously. Begin with such moderation that you may be able to bring it to completion. You should eat and drink heartily and treat yourself well, and at the same time be on your guard against sins. Be as good as you please within yourself, and yet with such moderation that the world without may not take fright at you, as the saying is. Is the heart good, all is good. Surely you may be merry with people and still be a good man. Others too wish to go to heaven, and yet do not lead a life of exercises such as yours." Which sounds eminently sane and modern advice, and was doubtless accepted by most of Suso's contemporaries, as it is accepted by present-day critics of the saints.

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[54] Gonzales, *Acta S. Ignatii* n. 14; *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 45: Rix, Testament of Ignatius Loyola, 1900, pp. 65f. Before he read the life of Christ and the lives of the saints, as he lay sick at Loyola, he imagined himself doing great and knightly deeds for a certain noble lady and "he remained buried in this thought for two, three or four hours together without feeling the time pass."—*Ibid.* n. 6 (p. 40); Rix, p. 46. Thus his conversion was a transfer of allegiance, a supernaturalising of his innate chivalry and heroism.

[55] *Life*, ch. 2.

But the saints themselves rejected these obvious counsels, for they held that such averaged precepts of prudence were inapplicable to them. They felt called to be specialists in sanctity; they had a vocation to embody in their lives the ideals of Christian perfection without admixture or afterthought. Their function in this respect, as a chosen band of spiritual pioneers and heroes, has been admitted even by non-Catholics. "The saints are of imperishable importance in the world of education," says Professor Foerster.[56] "They illuminate and demonstrate the teaching of Christ in many and varied directions, at the same time linking it up with human life." And the following tribute from a Protestant clergyman is worth quoting:

"If society is to be permeated by religion, there must be reservoirs of religion; like those great storage places up among the hills which feed the pipes by which water is carried to every home in the city. We shall need a special class of students of God, of men and women whose primary and absorbing interest it is to work out the spiritual life in all its purity and integrity. They will be an unworldly and unpractical race—all great students and artists are so. They are all theorists and idealists. But theories and ideas, however abstract they may appear, have, if solid, surprising practical results. Out of Faraday's abstruse investigations into Nature came the telegraph and the electric tramcar; and out of the transcendental contemplation of the saint spring the principles which are to regulate our families and our trades-unions. Whether monasticism is the best shape for the purely religious life in our own times is doubtful, but this is a mere question of form. The thing itself—contemplation, mysticism, the pursuit of religion in itself and by itself—is a standing necessity in every healthy State." [57]

The question here inevitably suggests itself, Are we all called to be spiritual specialists in this sense? Or at least

[56] *Marriage and the Sex-Problem*, Eng. trans. 1912 p. 133.

[57] C. Bigg, *Wayside Sketches in Ecclesiastical History*, 1906, p. 135. Even William James admits that "economically the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare."—*Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1906 [12], p. 377.

are all religious expected thus to be saints? We have already heard Fr. Doyle saying as a novice: "It depends entirely on myself whether I become a saint or not." "Let us never forget," he writes on another occasion, "that the saints did not do these things because they were saints, but the doing of these things made them saints. Do I ever say, when an occasion of denying myself comes, 'It's too hard, I am no saint.' Might it not be asked of me in justice, 'Why aren't you? It is your business to be one, but you are too lazy, you won't take the trouble.' Let us remember that we must not drag Christ down to our own level, but rather we must let Christ lift us up to His level." "Why are we not saints?" he asks again. "What else did we come here for? Want of courage and want of patience. We give up, we have not the strength of will and determination to succeed which the saints had."

These remarks, especially as addressed to religious, are quite accurate, provided we interpret "saint" in its ordinary general sense. But if we take the word as the technical expression for a person possessing sanctity in a heroic degree, that is, to mean a canonisable or canonised saint, then it would not be accurate to say that the question of becoming saints depends entirely on ourselves and on our taking sufficient trouble. "It is not true to say," declares a Jesuit spiritual writer,[58] "with reference to actual or habitual sanctity, that if we seriously wish to be saints and perfect as S. Bernard, S. Dominic, S. Francis, S. Ignatius, S. John Berchmans, we can become such. No; that depends principally on God's choice and on the mysterious predestination to the degree of sanctity and glory, fixed for each one in the eternal counsels of God's infinite wisdom and goodness. God always offers us the grace necessary for those acts of virtue which are imposed on us by His commandments and by the duties of our state. But the extraordinary grace required for heroic acts is offered to us only when His providence places us in the necessity of doing them or when He has

[58] Ch. de Smedt (Bollandist). *Notre vie surnaturelle*, Brussels 1920 [3], ii. 25. Fr. Doyle himself, of course, clearly felt called to heroic sanctity.

specially chosen us thus to show forth the marvellous power of His grace."

(4.) EXTERIOR MORTIFICATION

It may very well be, of course, that many of the saints indulged in excessive austerities and were guilty of "ill-judged and perhaps obstinate and perverse behaviour." [59] S. Bernard, for example, admitted in later life that his excessive penance had ruined his health.[60] There have been whole schools of saints and entire religious orders addicted to the practice of very severe austerities; for instance the medieval Irish monks and even laity.[61] And, on the other hand, there have been many saints—S. Thomas of Aquin [62] and the Little Flower, to take two widely different examples—who seem never to have practised voluntary pain-infliction. Even in the lives of the saints we therefore see exemplified that diversity of individual application and that liberty of spirit in selecting means which we have just explained and defended.

Yet we must not be too ready to condemn as exaggerated and imprudent in others what might be so for *us*. B. Henry

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[59] Fr. Martindale uses this phrase of S. Aloysius.—*In God's Army: Christ's Cadets,* 1917 [2], pp. 18f. "I make so bold as to say that a certain amount of Christian language in that matter of mortification is both metaphorical and hyperbolical. I go even further and say that, besides exaggerated language, there has been occasionally, or even frequently, exaggerated acting in individual cases. The Church is not responsible for the over-fervid behaviour of some of her best children."—Abbot A. Vonier, *The Human Soul,* ch. 20, 1920 [2], p. 131. See also article "Asceticism" by T. J. Campbell, S.J. in *Catholic Encyclopedia* i. 770.

[60] *Life* by William of S. Thierry, iv. 21; Migne, P. L. 185. 239.

[61] "In spite of all difficulties of climate, the Irish hermits successfully rivalled, in their extraordinary penances and austerities and vigils, the hermits of Egypt and even those of Syria."—Dom. E. C. Butler, *Cambridge Medieval History* 1 (1911) 434. "It is quite certain that in the Middle Ages the Island of Saints was the most ascetic country in Europe. In it fasting was practised to a unique degree."—Dom. L. Gougaud, *Irish Eccles.* Record, March, 1913, p. 225. In many monasteries fasting was perpetual; the laity fasted twice or thrice a week.—*Ibid.* pp. 226, 228.

[62] "It would be going too far to affirm that S. Thomas did not take the discipline according to the common rule. But he abstained from the violent and bloody penances so much appreciated among the Friars Preachers since the first half of the 13th century."—L. Petitot, O. P., *S. Thomas d Aquin,* Paris, 1923, pp. 109 f. S. Thomas was very sensitive to physical pain; when he had to be bled or cauterised, he anaesthetised himself by becoming absorbed in theological speculations.—*Ibid.* pp. 127, 129 f.

Suso, for example, who seems a clear case of exaggeration, had a mind of childlike simplicity and logical directness; he knew exactly why he adopted his terrible austerities and why he gave them up.[63] "He was in his youth of a temperament full of fire and life. And when this began to make itself felt and he perceived what a heavy burden he had in himself, it was very bitter and grievous to him. And he sought, by many devices and great penances, how he might bring his body into subjection to his spirit. . . . He continued this tormenting exercise for about sixteen years. At the end of this time, when his blood was now chilled and the fire of his temperament destroyed, there appeared to him in a vision on Whit Sunday a messenger from heaven, who told him that God required this of him no longer. Whereupon he discontinued it and threw all these things away into a running stream." Not a trace of morbidity or self-will, not the slightest evidence of mental distortion, not even any proof of ill effect on his health, for he lived to be sixty-five. Moreover, like S. Catherine of Siena, S. Rose of Lima and other saints, he was at times privileged to receive a spiritual mystic drink which served in lieu of bodily nourishment. But apart from any such miraculous intervention, there is abundant evidence to show that the austere practice of the saints is often actually more conducive to health than would be for them a normal life of ease. And modern experiments on bodily fatigue have shown the enormous influence and power of mental ideals. S. Teresa[64] enunciated a very helpful truth when she said: "Being myself so sickly, I was always under constraint and good for nothing, till I resolved to make no account of my body nor of my health. . . . My health has been much better since I have ceased to look after my ease and comforts."

"But to our generation," complains Francis Thompson,[65]

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[63] *Life*, c. 17.

[64] *Life*, 13, 9–10.

[65] *Health and Holiness*, pp. 20 f. The misuse to which such language can be put is exemplified by this comment in a Protestant journal: "Francis Thompson's *Health and Holiness* is one of the best modern antidotes to recurrent epidemics of asceticism."—*Modern Churchman* 14 (1924) 203.

"uncompromising fasts and severities of conduct are found to be piteously alien; not because, as rash censors say, we are too luxurious, but because we are too nervous, intricate, devitalised. We find our austerities ready-made. The east wind has replaced the discipline, dyspepsia the hair-shirt. . . . It grows a vain thing for us to mortify the appetite—would we had the appetite to mortify!" And so on, in a similar slightly flippant vein. Yet within ten years the men for whom this pleading was made were ready for the horrors and hardships of a terrible war. Fr. Doyle despaired of ever equalling "the worldly generosity of these men." It is only when the invitation is from Christ that we begin all at once to make excuse. The ridiculous unmanly plea that "we" are too nervous, intricate, devitalised and dyspeptic to face a fast or a discipline, may be applicable to a decadent industrial civilisation. For such by all means let the east wind and dyspepsia suffice; the saints would have no quarrel with such advice, as is apparent from all that has already been quoted. And let the abstinence be gentle. "The Vigil of S. Peter, you mean, Watkins," said Mr. Vincent.[66] "I thought so. Then let us have a plain beefsteak and a saddle of mutton; no Portugal onions, Watkins, or currant-jelly; and some simple pudding, Charlotte pudding, Watkins, that will do."

But, if we eliminate all or most of the practices approved by the experience of centuries, how can asceticism itself survive save as an abstract idea? How can we be "systematically ascetic or heroic in little unnecessary points," as psychologists advise us, without coming perilously near to the old-fashioned practices of fasting, self-restraint and physical pain? To say that such things are "unnatural" is no argument. What may be called ordinary virtue, marital fidelity, for instance, or business honesty or social justice, is not in the least natural; it is already an extraordinary conquest of nature. "Later I saw the vanity of this virtue, as of all others," says the pervert Renan.[67] "I recognised in particular

[66] Newman, *Loss and Gain*, ch. 10, p. 80.

[67] *Souvenirs*, édition Nelson, p. 257. "Instead of saying nature cares nothing about chastity," retorts Matthew Arnold, "let us say that human nature, *our* nature, cares about it a good deal."

that nature cares not in the least if man be chaste." But *human* nature, let us hope, cares a good deal. The rejection of everything "unnatural" from man's life would simply reduce us to the level of the jungle or the farmyard.

At any rate, it will be objected, our asceticism should be socially useful. "The practical course of action for us, as religious men," says William James,[68] "would, it seems to me, not be simply to turn our backs upon the ascetic impulse, as most of us turn them, but rather to discover some outlet for it, of which the fruits in the way of privation and hardship might be objectively useful. . . . Is it not possible for us to discard most of the older forms of mortification and yet find saner channels for the heroism which inspired them?" Now it is impossible to deal with this "impulse" as something existing, apart from its motives and object; it is absurd to try to canalise "heroism" as if it were a volume of fluid. And while it is admitted that the primary field for asceticism is the performance of our personal and social obligations, its object is not directly social work—that is another virtue—but the removal of obstacles to effective love of God and our neighbour. "To discard most of the older forms of mortification," approved by the experience of centuries, merely on the plea that they have no direct and immediate bearing on social welfare, is a shortsighted and antiquated piece of utilitarianism; the same drastic procedure might be used to eliminate most of our education, culture and pure science.

What, then, is the modern mould into which James wishes to pour asceticism? He first examines militarism, but in the end rejects it as brutal. "When we gravely ask ourselves," he says, "whether this wholesale organisation of irrationality and crime be our only bulwark against effeminacy, we stand aghast at the thought and think more kindly of ascetic religion." "I have often thought," he concludes, "that in the old monkish poverty-worship, in spite of the pedantry which

[68] *Varieties of Religious Experience,* 1906 [12], pp. 364 f. But even the Stoics realised that asceticism is primarily will-training and not social service. "If you want some private discipline, wait till you are thirsty in hot weather—then take a mouthful of cold water, spit it out again, and tell nobody."—Apollonius cited by Epictetus iii. 12, 17. But only a Christian would do that!

infested it, there might be something like that moral equivalent of war which we are seeking." He rightly says that "the desire to gain wealth and the fear to lose it are our chief breeders of cowardice and propagators of corruption."[69] But why limit our ascetic practices to one form? Wealth is but a means to comfort and luxury and honour; our asceticism should therefore place the axe to the root and lop off pleasure-seeking and self-indulgence as well as, or rather more than, money-grubbing. Furthermore, a proper attitude towards wealth becomes socially useful to the community only indirectly, by ennobling and spiritualising a man's character; just in the same measure, no more and no less, in which a proper attitude towards pain or drink or marriage, on the part of an individual, benefits the community.

If the Catholic ideal of poverty, spiritual or actual, is to be thus rehabilitated, the very same arguments serve to uphold the ideals of religious obedience and chastity. It is possible, of course, to emphasise in a onesided way the claims of authority; but nowadays the danger lies rather in their undue minimising; obedience is necessary in civic, commercial and professional life.[70] And anyone acquainted with the missionary, pastoral, educational and social work of Catholic

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[69] *Ibid.* pp 364 f. 367 f. James, writing in the midst of Catholic religious houses, regards evangelical poverty as "old monkish" and thinks that "a believer who flagellates or macerates himself to-day arouses more wonder and fear than emulation" (p. 298). Complacent ignorance unworthy of a scientific and accurate investigator.

[70] "As an old hand who has just come through the mill I would just like to say how important it is for you to endeavour to give your employers full confidence in you from the start. . . . Always carry out instructions given by those above you, whether you agree with them or not. . . . Always treat those above you with respect, no matter whether they are fools or know less than yourself." *Thomas Andrews* by S. F. Bullock, 1912, p. 38. "Every morning the first object of a conscientious civil servant is to see the utterances of his political chief, to interpret them as best he can, and to transmute them as well as he can into the work and policy of his office."—Lord Rosebery in *Appreciations and Addresses*, p. 209. W. James (*op. cit.* pp. 310 f.), in spite of his praise of poverty, fails entirely to understand religious obedience: "The secular life of our 20th century opens with this virtue held in no high esteem. . . . It is difficult even imaginatively to comprehend how men possessed of an inner life of their own could ever have come to think the subjection of its will to that of other finite creatures recommendable" As to the reconciliation of inner freedom and external direction and obedience, see this book pp. 325 ff.

priests, brothers and sisters, must admit the enormous supply of spiritual energy and self-sacrificing devotion which the institution of celibacy provides.[71] Thus, even judged solely by their social result, the Catholic counsels of perfection and lesser practices of asceticism can be justified.

We cannot, however, admit this social criterion as the sole measure of the worth of asceticism. Among works of satisfaction S. Thomas enumerates alms, fasting and prayer; by alms he understands "whatever is done for our neighbour's benefit," by fasting "whatever pertains to the affliction of the body," and by prayer "whatever worship is shown to God."[72] The Catholic ascetic looks directly towards God, only indirectly towards men; hence his practices cannot be reduced, as the American psychologist advocates, to S. Thomas's category of alms, excluding penance and prayer. It was precisely to combat this tendency, which, rightly or wrongly, came to be known as Americanism, that Pope Leo XIII wrote his Encyclical *Testem Benevolentiae* (22nd January, 1899), in which he defended prayer and penance against mere activism, the interior and hidden life against shirt-sleeve spirituality. "The same praise given to those who follow the active life must," says the Pope,[73] "be given to those who, delighting in retirement, give themselves up to prayer and bodily mortification. How much these have merited and merit for human society, those know indeed who are not ignorant of the power of the continual prayer of the just, especially when joined to bodily mortification, to appease God and to merit His grace."

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[71] The main reason for this superiority on the part of the Catholic sisters is the vow of voluntary celibacy. In the first place, it puts the nurses in quite a different position with regard to the patients and doctors, they cease indeed to be women and become sisters; and moreover they have put away the idea of leading lives of their own outside the hospital. This gives them a wholeness, dignity and sacredness which they would not otherwise be able to acquire."—Foerster, *Marriage and the Sex Problem,* ch. 9. Eng. trans. 1912, p. 143 note. Cf. Virchow's admission cited by Dr. J. J. Walsh, in *Addresses at Patriotic and Civic Occasions,* New York 1915, ii. 227.

[72] *Suppl.* q. 16, a. 3, ad. 5.

[73] *Lettres apostoliques,* Paris (Bonne Presse), v. 324. Cf. proposition 38 condemned in 1687 among the errors of Molinos: "The voluntary cross of mortifications is a heavy and fruitless burden and therefore to be discarded." —Denzinger-Bannwart, *Enchiridion Symbolorum,* n. 1258.

There are elements in Christian asceticism, unattainable in a merely naturalistic interpretation; these will be subsequently considered.

Meanwhile it must be emphasised, as against the academic prejudices of writers without any real first-hand knowledge, that those who earnestly strive after holiness do, as a matter of simple historical fact, usually feel the need of some exterior mortification, in addition to the minimum of abstinence and fasting which the Church prescribes for all the faithful. This practice is not confined to saints or to religious. Cardinal Vaughan, for instance, "for years wore on his left arm an iron bracelet with spikes on the inside which were pressed into the flesh." [74] "It is with a feeling of amazement, not to say of absolute horror," declared a Protestant reviewer,[75] "that the average man in the street learns that the stately Cardinal . . . was in the habit of keeping his body under by methods which take us back to the time of Thomas à Becket." The average man in the street has evidently a good deal to learn. He would probably be filled with considerably more amazement and horror were he to read the present biography, or were he to find such resolutions as these in the life of a titled Catholic laywoman, who lived seven hundred years subsequently to S. Thomas à Becket:

"The discipline every day, except Sundays and festivals, during the space of a Miserere; a few drops of blood offered up on Fridays. The pointed crucifix worn on Wednesdays and Fridays. One thing at luncheon, three at dinner, one at dessert; never to eat between meals without a good reason" (1859). Resolutions for Lent, 1868—"I will eat dry bread for luncheon, meat and vegetables only for dinner; and on abstinence days fish without sauce; and endeavour to mortify taste in every way that will not diminish sustenance." [76]

But indeed the non-Catholic reader will henceforth have to

[74] It was cut off his arm after death.—Snead-Cox, *Life of Cardinal Vaughan*, 1911 [2], ii. 451. "When I told you I was horribly afraid of the discipline," writes the Cardinal in a letter, "and that two or three cuts with it made me feel a sickness rising in my throat and that then I gave over and went to bed, it was the whole truth."—Catholic Gazette, November 1921, p. 263.

[75] W. T. Stead in *Review of Reviews*, July, 1910.

[76] *The Inner Life of Lady Georgiana Fullerton*, 1899, pp. 311, 327.

temper his horror, by reflecting that the Anglican Church has so far reverted to Becket as to establish religious communities of men and women, and by preparing himself to read in the life of a Canon of S. Paul's and Regius Professor of Divinity in Oxford that "for many years, perhaps more than twenty, he used a scourge; and of course he observed a rule of fasting.[77]

The Catholic view, then, founded on psychology and experience as well as on religious considerations, is that ordinarily a measure of exterior mortification is necessary for every true Christian. Of course, this need not necessarily take the form of fasting or self-scourging. The Church readily allows work to be substituted even for the obligatory fasts. "If your labour is necessary or serviceable," says S. Francis de Sales,[78] "I should select for you the discipline of labour in preference to that of fasting." But, as we are composed of body and soul, we cannot train and purify our souls except by bodily mortification of some sort. Even Fr. Faber, who was not inclined to make the path to sanctity too steep, declares that "there can be no interior mortification without exterior; and this last must come first; in a word, to be spiritual, bodily mortification is indispensable." "I tremble," he says, "when people speak much of interior mortification; it sounds so like a confession that they are leading comfortable lives." [79]

It does not follow that the exterior act, regarded in isolation from the inner act of the will, has of itself any spiritual efficacy.[80] S. Paul tells us that the Jewish prescriptions on food and sabbath-keeping "were the shadow of what was to

[77] S. Paget, *Henry Scott Holland,* 1921, p. 134.

[78] *Introduction to the Devout Life,* iii. 23, Eng. trans. (Richards) 1878, p. 202, Cf. Vén. Marie-Terèse (Théodelinde Dubouché), Foundress of the Congregation of Reparatory Adoration: "To fulfil the precept of penance, a life of work seems to me far above all the austerities invented by fervour. Oh, how I prefer to see my sisters washing dirty clothes and cleaning mud-stains than to see them taking in lay-sisters to wait on them so that they may *have leisure* for penance!"—*Vie* par Mgr. D'Hulst, Paris 1917 [6], p. 445.

[79] *Growth in Holiness,* ch. 11, 1872 [4], pp. 171, 187. Mère Therèse de Jésus (Xavérine de Maistre) preferred the Carmelite to the Visitation Order: "I have not enough virtue to arrive at such an interior death without the help of exterior penances."—*Vie* par l'Abbé Houssaye, Paris 1909 [5], p. 152.

[80] See above p. 139 ff.

come—the substance belongs to Christ." (*Coloss.* 2. 17). He declares that the pagan "ill-treatment of the body" was "of no real value against the indulgence of the flesh."[81] Exterior penance is usually necessary, especially in the beginning; but must always be combined with interior mortification, which, indeed, often supersedes it entirely. S. Francis de Sales[82] reprehends those religious who "base sanctity on austerity and more easily undertake to deprive their stomachs of food than their hearts of their own will." S. Philip Neri used to touch his forehead and say, "A man's sanctity lies within the compass of three fingers." "Another advice which he gave was to take care not to become so attached to the means as to forget the end; and that it is not well to be so taken up with mortifying the flesh as to omit to mortify the brain, which after all is the principal matter."[83]

As is well known, S. Ignatius laid great stress on the interior mortification involved in perfect obedience. "The religious," he says,[84] "who observes obedience of the will and not that of the understanding, has only one foot in religion." It will be necessary now to examine briefly what was the attitude of the Jesuit Founder towards exterior mortification. Two other great founders of religious orders, who had themselves practised great austerities, S. Basil at Pontus and S. Benedict at Monte Subiaco, drew up studiously moderate rules for their followers, deliberately rejecting the excesses of

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[81] "These observances have an air of wisdom through their appearance of spontaneous piety, humility and contempt of the body; but in themselves they have no value and tend to pander to the flesh."—*Coloss.* 2. 23. The Vulgate text is unintelligible. Cf. Prat, *Théologie de S. Paul,* 1 (1913 [5]) 395.

[82] Preface to his Constitutions: *Oeuvres* (Bar de Duc 1865), v. 332 f.

[83] Bacci, *Life of S. Philip Neri,* 1868 [2], pp. 268, 285. See also pp. 383 ff. below. Similarly S. John of the Cross (*Dark Night of the Soul,* i. 6) speaks of "discretion, submission and obedience, which is the penance of the reason and therefore a sacrifice more sweet and acceptable to God than all the other acts of bodily penance."

[84] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 471; similarly pp. 478, 520. The origination of an inhumanly military type of obedience, usually attributed to Ignatius, is not quite accurate. He usually consulted his subjects as to their inclination and aptitude.—*Ibid.* p. 478. The famous simile of the corpse he took from Francis of Assisi—*Mirror of Perfection* ch. 4, Eng. trans. (Countess De La Warr), 1902, p. 62.

the Syrian and Egyptian monks.[85] S. Ignatius went even further; he entirely eliminated all obligatory or customary penances from his Rule:

"The way of living, as to exterior things, . . . is common; nor are there customary penances or afflictions of the body to be undergone by way of obligation. But each one may choose those which, with the superior's approval, will seem to be suitable for his greater spiritual progress, and which for the same end superiors may impose on them.[86]

But so far was Ignatius from supposing the practice of corporal mortification to be banished from the Society, that, in addition to giving superiors the right of imposing it—by special order, not by general rule—he felt it necessary to warn his subjects against excess. "The chastisement of the body," he prescribes,[87] "should not be immoderate or indiscreet, in watching, abstinence and other exterior penances and labours, which usually bring injury and prevent greater good." Father Claudius Acquaviva, when General, thus accurately summed up the attitude of the Society:

"It is tantamount to a very serious error to assert that interior mortification, resignation, obedience and suchlike virtues are sufficient for us; and that we need not walk in that rough path which was trodden by the holy fathers. . . . The only point at issue, then, is not whether the practice of penance holds in the Society, but what should be in it our measure of

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[85] According to S. Basil (*Regulae brevius tractatae,* 137 f) no extra austerities were to be undertaken without special sanction. "Of what may be called artificial self-inflicted penances. . . . There is no trace whatever in S. Benedict's Rule or in his life as told by S. Gregory. . . . He prescribed for his monks sufficient food, ample sleep, proper clothing. . . . In place of rivalry in ascetic achievement, he established a common mode of life made up of a round of objective duties, none too onerous, common prayer, work and reading."—Dom. C. Butler, *Benedictine Monachism,* 1919, pp. 40, 45.

[86] *Summarium Constitutionum S.J.,* n. 4; *Examen Generale* i. 6. (p. 4 de la Torre), where it is explained in a note that the superior may devolve this task to the confessor or to any other. This innovation is emphasised in the Bull *Exposcit Debitum* of Julius III. "The reasonable sacrifice of the flesh to God will be a matter of devotion and not of rule."

[87] *Summ. Const.,* n. 48; *Const.* iii. 2, 5 (p. 102, de la Torre). "On the other hand let there not be a falling away in such practices so that, fervour of spirit growing cold, the human and lower affections become warm."—*Const.* vi. 3, p. 196.

discretion. . . . Whatever penances, then, will make us less ready to discharge these duties at the call of obedience or will in any way be an obstacle to our progress, such penances, being a hindrance and not a help, are to be regarded as indiscreet, though perhaps praiseworthy in the case of a solitary." [88]

The test of discretion is, therefore, the absence of all injury to work or health. Ignatius always feared ill-health and delusions in people addicted to indiscreet penance.[89] Writing even to a Poor Clare, he says: "With a healthy body you will be able to do much, with an unhealthy body I do not know what you could do. A sound body is a great help for great good or great evil; great evil in the case of those whose will is depraved and whose habits are bad; great good in the case of those whose will is wholly applied to God our Lord and inured to good habits." [90]

To secure discretion, Ignatius relied on "interior charity and that law of love which the Holy Spirit writes and impresses on the heart, rather than any exterior Constitutions." [91] But, owing to the excesses of prayer and penance which occurred in the nascent Society,[92] he decided to give authority to the Superiors, especially in the case of younger members. As to formed religious, "no rule is to be prescribed for them except that which prudent charity dictates to each; provided however that the confessor is always consulted and that, when a doubt arises as to what is proper, the matter is referred to the Superior." [93] He himself had to intervene several times to exhort or order his subjects to moderate their austerities.[94]

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[88] "Quis sit orationis et poenitentiarum usus in Societate iuxta nostrum Institutum."—*Epitolae Praepositorum Generalium,* Roulers 1909 [2], i 262.

[89] *Epistolae* 12 (1911) 632 ff, 641.

[90] *Epistolae* 1 (1903) 108. There is a saying attributed to S. Ignatius: "An ounce of holiness with splendid health is worth more in work for souls than splendid sanctity with an ounce of health."—Liber Sententiarum, n. 69, in *Epistolae S. Ignatii, Bononiae* 1837, p. 566.

[91] Preface to the Constitutions.

[92] O. Manares, S.J. († 1614), *Exhortationes super Instituto et Regulis S.J.,* ed. Losschaert, Brussels 1912, p. 612.

[93] *Const.* vi. 3, 1 (ed. de la Torre, p. 196).

[94] Letter to the Scholastics of Coimbra in *Epistolae* 1 (1903) 507. Letters to Borgia in *Epistolae* 2 (1904) 17, 234 f. Borgia did not always take it

Nowhere, however, do we find a trace of any authoritative suggestion that voluntary mortifications are not in perfect accord with the spirit and work of the Society. One has but to glance at almost any Jesuit biography to be convinced of the contrary. "Our holy father S. Ignatius," says the Ven. Luis de la Puente,[95] "in his Exercises strongly recommends the use of corporal penances to those devoted to prayer. Hence there has greatly flourished among Ours the spirit of penance as well as prayer—the daily use of a hair shirt, the taking of two disciplines for more than a quarter of an hour each, morning and evening, sleeping on a plank, taking only one meal in the day, remaining with arms in the form of a cross for several hours, taking the discipline in the refectory during one or two psalms, and other holy inventions invented by the fire of divine love which burnt in their hearts and stimulated them to persecute and maltreat themselves, striving with pious emulation to surpass one another." But there is nothing of obligation in all this. Apart from some special injunction, a Jesuit is quite free to adopt, as best for his own case, the view of S. Francis de Sales, who says: "If I were a religious, I think I should not ask to be allowed to communicate oftener than my brethren, nor to wear sackcloth, a hair shirt or an iron girdle, nor to perform extraordinary fasts, nor to use the discipline, nor anything of that kind. I should content myself with following in all respects the ways of the community." [96] While, on the other hand, such a one has no right whatever to accuse of singularity [97] or imprudence a

well. Nadal told him that Ignatius wished him to lessen his penances, and Borgia replied, "You will go so far that I will retire to the Carthusians."—Suau *Hist. de S. F. de Borgia*, 1910, p. 301.

[95] *Vida del V. P. Baltasar Alvarez*, iv. 1, Madrid 1920[2], p. 48. Cf. Suarez, *De religione S.J.*, i. 9. 14.

[96] *Spiritual Conferences*, No. 21, Eng, trans. (Gasquet and Mackey), 1906, p. 399.

[97] The first Congregation says in its 96th decree: "If anyone fasts, while others do not fast, this is not to be considered singularity."—*Epitome Instituti* iv. 83, Prato 1882, p. 225. Acquaviva says in his letter (p. 264) cited already: "Penances, not exceeding the measure appropriate to this norm, should be neither regarded not called alien to our Institute; nor is it to be considered a singularity because one practises them and another does not; provided that, while thus satisfying his piety, he does not neglect the duties common to the rest."

fellow-religious who, to use the words of Acquaviva, strives to "walk in that rough path which was trodden by the holy fathers."

In the light of these general considerations, we can now proceed to consider some of Fr. Doyle's lesser mortifications, reserving his more extraordinary acts for future treatment. He certainly felt a special call to continual voluntary mortification. "Other souls may travel by other roads," he once wrote, "the road of pain is mine." He developed a positive ingenuity in discovering possibilities of denying himself. Thus he was always striving to bear little sufferings and physical discomforts—were it only the irritation of a gnat—without seeking relief; he tried to imagine that his hands were nailed to the cross with Jesus. He gave up having a fire in his room and even avoided warming himself at one. Every day he wore a hair-shirt and one or two chains for some time; and he inflicted severe disciplines on himself. Moreover, between sugarless tea, butterless bread and saltless meat, he converted his meals into a continuous series of mortifications.

Naturally he had, in fact, a very hearty appetite and a keen appreciation of sweets and delicacies; all of which he converted into an arena for self-denial. He began even as a young boy. When he and his brother were getting from their big sister an exhortation on kindness and unselfishness, Willie, not needing much effort to discover what *he* was very fond of, suddenly exclaimed: "Yes, May, wouldn't this be *very* selfish, if I got a pot of jam and ate it all myself without giving any of it to Charlie?" A horrible deed of gluttony of which he was never guilty! No doubt his sister's reassuring answer confirmed his good will! We can realise the wonderful continuity of his life when over thirty years later we find him pencilling this resolution on the first page of the little private notebook he kept with him at the Front: "No blackberries. Give away all chocolates. Give away box of biscuits. No jam, breakfast, lunch, dinner." Some excerpts from his diary will enable us to realise how much this struggle against taste and appetite meant to him. On 1st September, 1911, he writes: "I feel a growing thirst for self-denial;

it is a pleasure not to taste the delicacies provided for me. I wish I could give up the use of meat entirely. I long even to live on bread and water. My Jesus, what marvellous graces You are giving me, who always have been so fond of eating and used to feel a small act of denial of my appetite a torture." A month later, just after giving a retreat in a Carmelite convent, he records: "I felt urged in honour of St. Teresa to give myself absolutely no comfort at meals which I could possibly avoid. I found no difficulty in doing this for the nine days. I have begged very earnestly for the grace to continue this all my life and am determined to try to do so. For example, to take no butter, no sugar in coffee, no salt, etc. The wonderful mortified lives of these holy nuns have made me ashamed of my gratification of my appetite." That he by no means found this mortification easy we have many indications. Thus on 5th Jan., 1912, he writes: "During Exposition Jesus asked me if I would give up taking second course at dinner. This would be a very great sacrifice; but I promised Him at least to try to do so and begged for grace and generosity." And again on 14th Sept., 1912: "Having again indulged my appetite, I made this resolution, that whenever I do so, no matter for what reason (health, feasts, etc.), I will enter it in the other book. I think this will be a check and a help to me to do what Jesus has asked so long—no indulgence whatever in food." "A fierce temptation during Mass and thanksgiving," he records a year later (18th Sept., 1913), "to break my resolution and indulge my appetite at breakfast. The thought of a breakfast of dry bread and tea without sugar in future seemed intolerable. Jesus urged me to pray for strength though I could scarcely bring myself to do so. But the temptation left me in the refectory, and joy filled my heart with the victory. I see now that I need never yield if only I pray for strength." A few extracts from a notebook kept during the year 1915 will give us some further idea of the struggle involved in conquering his appetite: "Tempted twice to take sugar. Gave up pancakes. Strong temptation to take honey. No butter at lunch (not inclined). Violent temptation to eat cake, etc.,

resisted several times. Overcame desire to take jam, honey and sugar. No bacon and eggs. Tempted to take second course. Fierce temptation to take cake, etc. Drank cold tea. Tempted to take sweets."

On the subject of butter there are many resolutions in the diary. Materially the subject may seem trivial, but psychologically it represents a great struggle and victory.[98] Any habit such as that of smoking may presumably be explained in purely material terms: the formation of antibodies in the system and the consequent periodical need of toxins to restore the balance. But no such type of medical explanation can alter the fundamental human fact that such a habit can be controlled or abolished by a sufficient exercise of will-power, which ordinarily cannot be accomplished without religious motives. Let us hope that old-fashioned Catholic practices—for example, giving up smoking or doing without butter during Lent—will not be lightly laid aside. It is in such little acts that man rises above the beast and fosters his human heritage of a rational will. So Fr. Doyle's butter-resolutions are not at all so unimportant or whimsical as they who have ever thoughtlessly eaten and drunk may be inclined to fancy. "God has been urging me strongly all during this retreat," he writes in September, 1913, "to give up butter entirely. I have done so at many meals without any serious inconvenience; but I am partly held back through human respect, fearing others may notice it. If they do, what harm? I have noticed that X takes none for lunch; that has helped me. Would not I help others if I did the same?" "One thing," he continues, "I feel Jesus asks, which I have not the courage to give Him—the promise to give up butter entirely." On 29th July, 1914, we find this resolution: "For the present I will take butter on two mouthfuls of bread at breakfast but none at other meals." To this decision he seems to have adhered.

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[98] Compare S. Margaret Mary's eight years of struggle against her repugnance to cheese."—*Life*, p. 33. Bl. Henry Suso "had a fondness for fruit, but God would not let him indulge it. . . . For two years he ate no more fruit, much though he longed for it all the time. When the two years were ended, . . . [he] began again to eat fruit with thankfulness." *Life* ch. 9, Eng. trans. (Knox), 1914 [2], p. 28.

Not only did Fr. Doyle mortify himself in the quality of the food he took but he also refused to allow his appetite to be satisfied in quantity. "Towards the end of the retreat," he wrote on 3rd December, 1914, "a light came to me that, now that I have given Jesus all the sacrifices I possibly can in the matter of food, He is now going to ask retrenchment in the *quantity*. So far I have not felt that He asked this, but grace now seems to urge me to it. I dread what this means, but Jesus will give me strength to do what He wants."

As with food, so with sleep. We have already seen how Fr. Doyle often robbed himself of sleep in order to pray. Sometimes, too, he slept on the floor or put boards in his bed. "During the last three nights of the —— retreat," he writes (20th Dec., 1914), "I slept on the floor without feeling any inconvenience after, though I woke very often on account of the pain. This is the first time I have slept this way on more than one (successive) night." On 12th July, 1915, he writes thus in his diary: "Not feeling well, I gave up the intention of sleeping on boards, but overcame self and did so. I rose this morning quite fresh and none the worse for it, proving once more how our Lord would help me if I were generous." And in September, 1915, he made the resolution to 'put boards in his bed *every* night when at home.'

It is scarcely necessary to remark that all these mortifications were extremely difficult to flesh and blood. There was no such thing in Fr. Doyle as a natural pleasure or pride in, or, at least, indifference to, physical discomfort and suffering. He really loathed and detested the life which he voluntarily imposed on himself. "My God," he once wrote (22nd October, 1915), "this morning I was in despair. After some days of relaxation owing partly to sickness, I resolved to begin my life of crucifixion once more, but found I could not. I seemed to have lost all strength and courage, and simply hated the thought of the life. Then I ran to You in the Tabernacle, threw myself before You and begged You to do all since I could do nothing. In a moment all was sweet and easy. What help and grace You gave me, making me see clearly that I must never again give up this life or omit to mark my

book." [99] This extract not only shows us his natural repugnance but also reveals the source of his strength. His indomitable determination to overcome himself is especially manifested in an expedient which he adopted latterly, namely, binding himself by a temporary vow to do that which he felt tempted to avoid. "Jesus taught me a simple way to-day of conquering the temptation to break resolutions. When, for example, I want to take sugar in my tea, etc., I will make a vow not to do so for that one occasion, which will compel me to do it, no matter what it may cost. I know often I shall have to force myself to take this little vow; but I realize that if only I can bring myself to say 'I vow,' then all the conflict raging in my soul about that particular thing will cease at once. This will be invaluable to me in the future." (22nd Feb., 1914.) We have several records of his using this heroic device.

"Three times to-day by making a vow I was able to force myself to do what I did not want to do. Once I had almost to shout out the vow, and then I had no trouble at all in doing what I promised—to remain up till night prayers. Once the vow was followed by a fierce temptation to break it, and a great regret I had bound myself. But again I had no difficulty in doing without sugar, and much peace and strength followed the victory." (22nd Nov., 1914.)

"It came home to me to-day as it never did before, the immense help little vows would be. By this means I can force myself to do almost anything; and (such little vows) being taken for one occasion only, *e.g.* I will not read a paper to-day, are quite easy to keep. I have gained several victories by this means. I have noticed that there is often great difficulty in forcing myself to make the vow, but very little in carrying it out."

It does not appear that this rather drastic procedure ever led to anxiety or scrupulosity. Fr. Doyle had thought things

[99] This he called "the book of little victories." It is consoling and human to read the very next entry (5th Nov.): "Again for the past few days I have broken my resolutions and indulged myself. I see two causes of this: idleness, not overcoming my natural dislike for certain kinds of work, *e. g.*, preparation of sermons; and above all, yielding to depression."

out clearly; he knew exactly what he wanted and what he could do. He retained the militant enthusiasm of his boyhood. Whenever he met an obstacle in his spiritual life and found himself shying at it, he—to use an expressive phrase—took himself by the back of the neck and threw himself over. And, wonderful to relate, he did it all with the zest of a youth in a cross-country race.[1] His acts of self-conquest were not a cold calculated succession of deliberate inhibitions, nor was his ideal mere apathy or dehumanised perfection. In real christian asceticism and mysticism there is always a joyous note, a paradoxical combination of gaiety and pain.

(5.) AGENDO CONTRA

"It is an indisputable fact," admits a Protestant writer,[2] "that Protestantism, with its objection on principle to the ascetic ideal of life, occupies an entirely isolated position amidst all the great religions, including those of the Ancient World." It is indeed difficult to see how any earnest Christian can deny the principle of asceticism, except by confusing it either with particular exterior practices such as those just enumerated, or with penitential perversions and exaggerations. Yet under the term asceticism we must include not only the voluntary infliction of pain and fasting or abstinence, but also every deliberate exterior act of self-denial, were it only the restraint of curiosity, the conquering of lassitude or perseverance in an uncongenial duty. There are many good and holy souls who have never dreamt of taking a discipline or wearing a hair-shirt; yet asceticism is not wanting to their lives. Indeed, there is always a danger lest unusual penances may be

[1] Compare this entry in his diary (17th January, 1912): "Our Lord wants me to give Him all I can give *cheerfully*, not repining nor regretting any sacrifice; not saying, 'I wish I had not to do this or suffer this cold, pain, etc.,' but rather, 'I wish I could do more for You, Jesus, I wish it were colder.'"

[2] Foerster, *Marriage and the Sex-Problem*, ch. 9, Eng. trans. 1912, pp. 154 f. Cf. Morison, *Service of Man*, 1888, p. 214: "The form of his [Pascal's] asceticism may be questioned by different schools of Theology; but no earnest thorough-going Christian exists who does not deny himself one way or another and admit asceticism in principle."

undertaken in a spirit of self-will and vanity, to the detriment of that safest and most hidden of all mortifications—the persevering perfection of common life. St. Teresa, evidently writing from personal knowledge, describes with gentle irony those religious who delight in self-imposed penance and neglect the divinely imposed penance of rules and daily duties. "It is amusing (she says [3]) to see the mortifications with which some of their own accord afflict themselves. Sometimes there seizes them a fit of immoderate and indiscreet penance, which lasts for about two days. The devil then suggests to their imagination that such mortifications injure them. So they never again do penance—not even what the rules of the order enjoin—as they have found that mortification does them harm; and they do not observe even the least injunctions of the rule, such as silence, which cannot do us any harm. And as soon as we fancy that we have a headache, we refrain from going to choir—though this would hardly kill us. One day we omit going because our head aches, the next because it did ache, and three more days we keep away lest it should ache! We love to invent penances of our own."

These practical remarks remind us of what homely stuff the garment of holiness is spun. Often when we read the lives of the saints we are apt to lose the real perspective. Unconsciously singling out the special graces and extraordinary sufferings, we pay insufficient attention to the continuous background of minor physical ills, commonplace disappointments and petty annoyances, which loom so large in our seemingly ordinary lives, but which so often escape the chronicler and reader of the lives of the saints. Yet God never exempts even chosen souls therefrom, for it is precisely in this subjection to these general laws of providence that human goodness is to be attained. "Alas, my sovereign Lord," complained Saint Margaret Mary,[4] "why dost Thou not leave me in the common way of the daughters of Holy Mary? Hast Thou brought me into Thy holy house to destroy me? Give

[3] *Way of Perfection*, ch. 10.

[4] *Life of Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque*, published in French by the Monastery of the Visitation of Paray-le-Monial, Eng. trans. 1912 (Visitation Library, Roselands, Walmer, Kent), p. 60.

Thy extraordinary graces to those chosen souls who will correspond with them better than I do, for I only resist Thee. All I wish for is Thy love and Thy cross; that suffices for me to become a good religious and that is all I desire." Thus these gratuitous favours are not only not sought for, but in no wise dispense the recipient from those general conditions and limitations which are so wondrously exemplified even in the life of Christ. Most of His earthly existence He spent as a village artisan; often He was footsore, weary and hungry; He was misunderstood even by those nearest to Him, He felt disappointment and, humanly speaking, failure. So too in the case of even His most faithful followers the rapturous glory of Thabor is but a transitory illumination of lives spent in obscure Nazareth-like drudgery or in a toilsome thankless mission. Saint Margaret Mary, for all her graces, had as a novice to mind the monastery donkeys; nor did God's providence prevent a windlass from hitting her in the jaw and smashing her teeth.[5] What was probably still harder, she had to suffer from the misunderstanding of holy people; her directors regarded her as a visionary, her sisters opposed what they considered a new-fangled devotion.[6]

It has ever been thus in the lives of those who have striven to follow Christ. "Whosoever does not carry his own cross and walk in My steps, can be no disciple of Mine." (*S. Luke* 14. 27.) This cross-carrying, however, is not a public procession, drawing tears from the onlooking daughters of Jerusalem; it is a silent drama enacted in the private theatre of the human heart. And, as a rule, the cross is not a huge visible structure, plainly recognisable and easily reminiscent of Christ; rather is it doled out to us piecemeal, in mere matches and sawdust as it were, in tiny fragments wherein only the eye of loving faith can discern the lineaments of Calvary.

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[5] *Ibid.* pp. 38*f*, 127. Compare also the "tiny little things" which Blessed Thérèse offered to our Lord: the annoyance of a bead-rattling sister, the splashing of an awkward neighbor in the laundry.—*Sœur Thérèse . . . Histoire d'une âme, pp.* 195 f; Eng. trans. (*The Little Flower*), pp. 206–208.

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 77, 152 f. So the Curé of Ars was attacked by his fellow-priests.—Monnin, *Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. 1924, pp. 202 ff.

This truth must not be forgotten while reading this book. For it is easy to chronicle what is out of the ordinary, and it is only the abnormal and artificial that is usually committed to writing; whereas the real annals of self-conquest and sufferings are garnered only by the recording angels. We shall meet, in the case of Fr. Doyle, many proofs of persevering and deliberately sought mortification, and even of heroic self-immolation. But this must not blind us to the fact that, beneath this self-imposed apparatus of suffering, there was in his life, as in ours, a continuous layer of petty troubles, pains, discomforts, annoyances, disappointments, mistakes, misunderstandings. These are God-given and have first claim on us; to shirk these and to seek out artificially constructed suffering, like those nuns gently satirised by S. Teresa, is to build the house of holiness on sand. So while we are picturing the spiritual edifice raised by Fr. Doyle, let us not forget the foundation whereon it was based. "We love to invent penances of our own," says the great Carmelite, alluding to those fervent souls whose vain ambition it is to erect castles in the air. That Fr. Doyle was not one of such, is obvious to those who knew him intimately. It would indeed be true to say that his greatest suffering in life did not consist at all in what is set down in this book, but rather in those limitations and disabilities, mistakes and misinterpretations, which, individually perhaps petty, are collectively severe.

Let us, by way of instance, allude to a temperamental defect of Fr. Doyle, which probably cost him far more efforts and much greater mortification than his few extraordinary penances to which we may be inclined to attach undue importance. He was naturally impetuous and hot-tempered; even to the end, in spite of his life-long struggle, he was liable to be irritable and impatient. He rarely indeed lost his temper; but at times he had to make strenuous efforts to restrain himself. As prefect or theologian, when playing football, he was often inclined to become over-excited and even angry; some of his opponents have rueful recollections of play which was decidedly rough. Fr. Doyle was once saying good-bye to his brother at Cork railway-station,

promising himself a feast of the breviary and some hours of quiet prayer during the journey to Dublin, when to his horror he saw a lady acquaintance coming towards him. "Are you going to Dublin, Father? Won't you come into my carriage? My sister is with me and we can travel up together." Fr. Doyle murmured "Damn!" under his breath—which, fortunately for our consolation was distinctly audible to his brother; but the next instant he was all smiles and amiability, he put his baggage into the indicated compartment, and talked and joked as if he were having the pleasantest experience of his life. Could we but collect and chronicle the thousands of similar trivial incidents in Fr. Doyle's life, we should realise how very like our own lives it was, in spite of a few extraordinary deeds and its romantic close. He loved to invent penances of his own, not however to supersede those sent by God, but to supplement them and to prepare himself for them. The former—whether facts or disciplines or vigils—can be told in detail; the latter must be taken for granted by analogy with our own lives.

The hardest and most useful penance is patient submission to, and persistent work among, the God-sent conditions, physical, social and mental, of our lives. This is probably true for every life as lived, though not as written; it is just as true of the saints as of ordinary folk, though not every saint has expressed the truth with the blunt precision of St. John Berchmans: My *greatest* mortification is common life." "On paper," says his biographer,[7] "this maxim looks like nothing. But those who will try to practise it as Berchmans understood it will soon learn how much it costs." "I understood the saying of Berchmans," writes the Ven. Claude de la Colombière in his Spiritual Retreat.[8] "Common life is a very great mortification, for it mortifies body and mind. All else is often only the result of vanity which seeks distinction. In

[7] Delehaye, *S. John Berchmans,* New York 1921, p. 105. We read in the Bull of his Canonisation (22 January, 1888): "John brought the virtues of the other two [Aloysius and Stanislaus] more within the reach of imitation; because without doing anything extraordinary as far as eye could see, he attained the highest perfection."

[8] *Lights in Prayer* (Quarterly Series), 1914, p. 149.

any case, before doing what is extraordinary, I should wish to do all that is ordinary and to do it under all the circumstances required by the rules. This includes much and leads to admirable holiness."

Fr. Doyle often made similar resolutions. "I will strive ever to perform each action as perfectly as possible," he writes at the end of his tertianship, "paying special attention to small duties, *e.g.*, saying grace, odd Hail Marys, etc. It seems to me that God is asking this particularly from me and by this means I am to find the chief road to sanctity." During his 1909 retreat he wrote:

"It seems to me the best and most practical resolution I can make in this retreat is to determine to perform each action with the greatest perfection. This will mean a constant 'going against self,' ever *agendo contra,* at every moment and on every single day. I have a vast field to cover in my ordinary daily actions, *e.g.* to say the Angelus always with the utmost attention and fervour. I feel, too, that Jesus asks this from me, as without it there can be no real holiness."

And again thus he records during his 1910 retreat:

"What is my special end, for which God made me? More and more each retreat I see what this is, always the same thought, always the same desire and longing for *holiness.* God wants sanctity from me. This is to be acquired chiefly by three means: (1) constant little acts of mortification; (2) constant aspirations; (3) perfection of each action, even the odd Hail Marys."

Thus Fr. Doyle realised that he could "do much for Jesus that is hard, without being singular or departing from common life." [9]

In appearance this resolution of minute fidelity is modest and easy; but in reality it constitutes a slow heroism of self-conquest, a martyrdom whose pain is drawn out into a life-long succession of pin-pricks. Thus testified Père de la Colombière who made a similar resolution in his tertianship retreat: [10]

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[9] Quoted above p. 69.
[10] *Lights in Prayer* (Quarterly Series), p. 149.

"It seems as if it would be easy to spend any other kind of life holily; and the more austere, solitary and obscure it might be and separated from all intercourse, the more pleasing it would appear to me to be. As to what usually terrifies nature, such as prisons, constant sickness and even death, all this seems easy compared with this everlasting war with self, this vigilance against the attacks of the world and of self-love, this living death in the midst of the world. When I think of this, I foresee that life will seem to be of prodigious length, and that death will never come soon enough."

This rather energetic language does not apply merely to the earnest work of minute and painstaking perfection in daily duties and rules; it refers more to the Ignatian ideal of *agere contra,* the continuous going against self in every act. This ideal is to do each action perfectly; not only to perform each duty efficiently, but in each free non-obligatory action to choose the harder alternative. The phrase, so familiar in recent Jesuit biography and literature, occurs in the meditation on the Kingdom of Christ at the beginning of the Second Week of the Spiritual Exercises:

"Those who are more desirous to show affection and to distinguish themselves in entire service of their eternal King and universal Lord, will not only offer their persons to labour, but also—*acting against* [11] their own sensuality and their carnal and worldly love—will make offerings of greater worth and value, saying: . . . It is my deliberate determination—provided it be Your greater service and praise—to imitate You in bearing all injuries and all reproach and all poverty, actual as well as spiritual, if Your Most Sacred Majesty will wish to choose and receive me to such a life and state."

St. Ignatius, with the true instincts of a general, wishes us not merely to defend ourselves against love of ease and creature-comforts, but to take the offensive against comfort and pleasure, if we wish to be distinguished in the army of

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[11] Spanish, *haciendo contra;* first Latin version, *certando contra;* Latin version of Father Roothaan (1834), *agendo contra.—Exercitia Spiritualia* (M H S J), Madrid 1919, p. 321.

Christ. In desolation we are "to hold on a little beyond the complete hour" or prayer, and thus "not only to resist the adversary but to rout him." Similarly "when we feel an inclination or repugnance against actual poverty, when we are not indifferent to poverty or riches, it is very helpful for the extinguishing of such an inordinate inclination, to ask in the colloquies—even though it be against the flesh—that our Lord would choose us for actual poverty." [12] This idea of positive self-attack is one of the keynotes of the spirituality of the Exercises. *"Vince teipsum,"* wrote Fr. Doyle in some notes of a retreat for priests. "This is the secret of the Exercises. 'I learnt no other lesson from my master Ignatius,' said St. Francis Xavier, referring to his first retreat at Paris. Here we all fail—good men, zealous men, holy men. Prayer is easy, works of zeal attractive; but going against self, till grace and perseverance give facility, is cruel work, a hard battle."

It is in the Rules and Constitutions of the Society, however, that Ignatius has embodied the most uncompromising statement of the principle. "Just as worldly men who follow the things of the world," he says,[13] "love and seek with great diligence honours, fame, the repute of a great name on earth, as the world teaches them; so those who are advancing in spirit and seriously following Christ our Lord, love and ardently desire the direct opposites, that is, to be clothed in the same garb and livery as their Lord, for His love and reverence; so that, if it could be without any offence against the Divine Majesty and without the sin of their neighbour, they would wish to suffer reproaches, false witness and injuries and to be treated and regarded as fools, provided they themselves give no occasion therefor." Ignatius prescribes that this ideal is to be placed before candidates for the Society. Realising its superhuman height, he mercifully remarks: "If anyone, owing to our human weakness and misery, does not feel in himself such inflamed desires for

[12] *Spiritual Exercises*: Annotation 13 of First Week, and Second Week (Three Couples of Men).

[13] *Summarium Constitutionum*, n. 11; *Examen Generale* iv. 44—*Constitutiones S.J.*, ed. P. de la Torre, Madrid 1892, p. 30.

these things in the Lord, let him be asked if at least he feels in himself the desire to have such holy desires." [14] "The better to arrive at this stage of perfection so precious in the spiritual life," he continues, "let it be each one's great and earnest study to seek in the Lord his greater abnegation and in all things, as far as possible, his continual mortification." "It will be our task," he grimly adds, "to help him in these things, according to the grace which the Lord will deign to give us for His greater praise and glory." [15]

There is nothing new, of course, in this doctrine of continual self-denial, except its categorical enunciation for a whole religious order.[16] Naturally we find the idea strongly emphasised in Jesuit biographies. "It is the expression *agendo contra sensualitatem* which makes the true Jesuit," writes Père Olivaint.[17] "The better one practises this, the more is one a Jesuit. It is the summary of the Exercises of S. Ignatius. It is also the secret of the saints. How did they all arrive at sanctity? *Agendo contra.*" The general principle is certainly applicable to all the saints, for it is simply a pithy statement of asceticism. But in the lives of many members of the Society of Jesus, as well as of others, we find it interpreted in practice as mortification in everything and always. Thus on 2nd February, 1909, Fr. Doyle records this resolution: "The constant mortification of intense fervour at each little duty. In general: (*a*) never do anything you would like; (*b*) deny yourself every gratification; (*c*) deny yourself every pleasure; (*d*) do the thing *because* it is hard; (*e*) in all things *agere contra.*" This he explains in detail as including the following among other particular conclusions: "God wants the sacrifice of never going to plays, concerts, cinemas, football matches or any sight for pure gratification. Do not look at

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[14] *Examen Generale* iv. 45—p. 32 ed. de la Torre.

[15] *Ibid.* n. 46 (p. 32); partly in Summarium Constitutionum, n. 12.

[16] Cf. Tauler, *Institutions* ch. 4: "If you are in doubt as to what is most pleasing to the Lord, the surest way is to choose what is most against nature." Also *Imitation of Christ,* ii. 12, 9–14.

[17] *Journal de ses retraites annuelles,* Paris 1922[9], i. 7. Cf. p. 53: "A defensive is not enough, the *agendo contra* is necessary to exterminate evil passions. But how can this *agendo contra* be accomplished, if Jesus does not Himself exercise it within me?"

pictures, advertisements on hoardings; do not look into shop windows. Never deliberately waste a moment of time. Do not read letters for some time after receiving them. Don't complain of others or of anything else. When in pain or unwell, try not to let others know it. Hence never say you have a headache, etc. Never give yourself relief in small sufferings." "I am more and more convinced," he continues, "that Jesus is asking from me the complete and absolute sacrifice of every gratification, pleasure, self-indulgence and comfort which, within the Rule and without injuring my health or work, I can give Him." How faithfully Fr. Doyle carried out this appalling programme the further account of his life will show. Previous quotations have made it abundantly clear that this ideal, so far from being dissonant with the Jesuit spirit, seems, on the contrary, to be simply its literal fulfilment. How far then are most or all religious of the Society bound thus to practise it? Let an experienced Jesuit writer answer: [18]

"Must this principle be taken literally: to seek continually, in all things, what is opposed to our natural inclinations, what imposes a suffering upon us? Several of our Fathers of the Society of Jesus, who are held up for our admiration in our menologies, thus understood and practised it. But it seems that for the great majority their physical and moral forces, aided by what may be called ordinary grace, are insufficient to make them capable of this practice; it requires a very special and extraordinary grace and consequently a particular vocation."

In following this vocation Fr. Doyle was merely following in the footsteps of many of the saints. Thus we are told of the Curé of Ars that "he made it a rule never to smell a flower, never to drink when suffering from extreme thirst, never to drive away a fly, never to appear to perceive a fetid odour, never to evince disgust at a repulsive sight, nor to complain of anything whatever that might disturb his comfort, never to sit down, never to rest on his elbows when kneeling; he was very sensitive to cold but would never allow

[18] Ch. de Smedt, S.J., *Notre vie surnaturelle*, Brussels, 1920 [3], ii. 248 f.

of any precautions against it." [19] Rather a depressing catalogue of negations for most people, and explicable, even in the case of those specially called to it, only by principles higher than mere asceticism. And there have been great saints, lovers of the cross, who never adopted this policy of continuous self-contrariness. Francis of Assisi, for example, with his love of nature, communing with the birds and the fishes, loving even Brother Fire and singing the Canticle of the Sun. When he was on his deathbed he longed for "the fish called skate" and with childlike simplicity he asked for the cakes "called by the Romans mostaccioli, made of almonds, sugar and other things." [20] And S. Gertrude, when one night she was tired from spiritual exercises, "took some grapes with the intention of refreshing her Spouse in herself." [21] "I know not," writes Father Faber with gentle satire,[22] "I know not how S. Gertrude and her grapes would have fared with some spiritual writers, most holy men, yet somehow sterner than saints have for the most part been. She would have been told that she should remember our Lord's thirst upon the cross and that she should not give way, unless indeed she felt that she had not grace for the heights of perfection. All this would have been true and to many souls the right advice; yet the revelation teaches us that the rule is not invariable and gives us a glimpse of another spirit."

There is no doubt that, in this as in other matters, Fr.

[19] A. Monnin, *Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. 1924, p. 516. Cf. Mgr. C. Gay, *De la mortification,* Tours (no date) p. 145: "Except in case of a special attraction, tried and approved, constituting the soul in a particular state which, if it is from God, rarely lasts a whole lifetime, what a false understanding of the Spirit of the Gospel it would be to go to these extremes and especially to fix oneself in them!"

[20] *Mirror of Perfection* ch. 11, Eng. trans. (Countess De la Warr) 1902, p. 165.

[21] *Legatus divinae pietatis* iii. 57; *Life and Revelations of S. Gertrude,* 1864, p. 244.

[22] F. W. Faber, *All for Jesus* ch. 6, sect. 4, p. 174. "It is a very hard, and to many souls would prove a dangerous, advice, which some spiritual authors give; namely, that a spiritual disciple should in everything that is of itself indifferent (in case that several objects be offered to choice) take that which is most contrary to his natural inclination . . . and thus to live in a continued contradiction and crossing of nature."—Aug. Baker, *Holy Wisdom* ii. 1, 5 (n. 10); ed. Abbot Sweeney, 1876, p. 220. Cf. Baker's application of this in the *Inner Life of Dame Gertrude More* ch. 12, ed. Weld-Blundell 1911, pp. 77 ff.

Doyle's scheme of life is unsuitable for all but a few specially chosen souls. For one less trained in will or less sure in spiritual perspective there might easily be danger of entanglement in minutiae and over-attention to what is secondary. All this apparatus of mortification is but a means to an end, it should not be made an end in itself. We must not be so "busy about much serving," we should not so burden or worry ourselves about what we eat and drink, that we are "careful and troubled about many things" and lose sight of the "one thing necessary"—the best part chosen by Mary. (*S. Luke* 10. 40–42.) This persistent and systematic thwarting of self helped Fr. Doyle to strengthen his will and to fix it on God. He never lost himself in a maze of petty resolutions, he never became anxious or distracted. But the armour of Goliath would hamper David. There are those whom elaborate prescriptions and detailed regulations would only strain and worry. And these best find the peace of God in a childlike thankful acceptance of His gifts, without either careless indulgence or self-conscious artificiality.

In matters of moment requiring deliberation and prayer we may often, with God's help, accept what is harder and more distasteful or humiliating. But in the trivial incidents of daily life any attempt to find out in each case which is the more disagreeable alternative, would merely lead to scrupulous petty-mindedness and would wastefully absorb thought and energy that might be better spent. In any case, such a materialistic interpretation of the great Ignatian principle would debase it to the level of an automatic tabu. The seeking of one's continual mortification in all things—as far as possible, S. Ignatius is careful to add—does not imply an obligation to investigate and weigh the amount of self-denial in each action; it means that our general attitude should be to choose the hard, robust view of life and to eliminate the searching for comfort and the pandering to self which so often mar the strenuous devotion to an ideal. In the matter of food, for example, the going-against-self consists rather in the use of food as a means and the avoidance of querulousness and singularity than in a specialised and detailed discrimination

of appetite and victuals. "I think," says S. Francis de Sales,[23] "I think that there is more profit in eating whatsoever is offered you, whether it suits your taste or not, than in always choosing the worst." And elsewhere he tells us that "we are not to weigh every petty action to know whether it be of more value than others; yea, there is often a kind of superstition in trying to make this examination. . . . It is not good service to a master to spend so much time in considering what is to be done as in doing the things which are to be done. We are to proportion our attention to the importance of what we undertake." [24]

As a humorous but not inaccurate picture of a healthy schoolgirl's reaction against the exaggerated and misplaced inculcation of the principle of *agere contra*, we may quote these lines of reminiscence written by a Catholic essayist: [25]

" 'Making an act' was the convent phraseology for doing without something one wanted, for stopping short on the verge of an innocent gratification. If I gave up my place in the swing to Viola Milton, that was an act. If I walked to the woods with Annie Churchill, when I wanted to walk with Elizabeth, that was an act. It I ate my bread unbuttered or drank tea unsweetened, that was an act. It will be easily understood that the constant practice of acts deprived life of everything that made it worth the living. We were so trained in this system of renunciation that it was impossible to enjoy even the very simple pleasures that our convent table afforded. If there were anything we particularly liked, our nagging little consciences piped up with their intolerable 'Make an act, make an act.' And it was only when the last mouthful was resolutely swallowed that we could feel sure we had triumphed over asceticism."

He who made the motto "going against" current coin would

[23] *Introduction to the Devout Life* iii. 23; Eng. trans. (Richards), 1878, p. 203. "His resolution always to do the harder thing he will understand as referring only to matters of some consequence; if applied to every single trifle, 'it might cause scruple and hamper energy for God's work.' "—McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.*, 1924, p. 178.

[24] S. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God* viii. 14, Eng. trans. (Mackey) 1884, p. 362.

[25] Agnes Repplier, *In Our Convent Days*, London and Boston 1905, p. 188.

certainly have repudiated the paternity of such asceticism. "When our holy Father saw a young man eating with appetite," says Father Lancicius,[26] "he was wonderfully pleased; and for this reason we used to call Bendict Palmes, a rather stout youth, to his own table, and he used to look at him good-humouredly while he ate and to encourage him not to be ashamed."

It is clear, then, that it is quite possible to interpret such a principle as *agere contra* in a literal mechanical way, to apply it in an unhealthy nagging manner, and so to break it up into fragments that its spontaneity and vitality evaporate. No ascetic maxim should be enunciated as a general rule, rigidly applicable in all cases apart from the attractions of grace.[27]

(6.) SPIRITUAL ACCOUNTANCY

"Nothing is so easy," says S. Francis de Sales,[28] "as to say in general that we must renounce ourselves and give up our own will. But when we have to come down to practice, there is where the difficulty lies." The principle of going-against-self, already explained, shows us how distrustful was S. Ignatius of vague generalities and how anxious he was to encourage detailed, practical, immediately realisable resolu-

[26] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 496.

[27] Similarly the Constitutions [*Summarium* n. 8; *Examen Generale* iv. 7, p. 18 ed. de la Torre] strongly prescribe the "leaving" of relatives and the converting of carnal love for relatives into "spiritual." Interpreted at its face value, this rule sounds rather harsh and inhuman. But notice Borgia's love of his children. His "letters show us that he followed with interest the smallest happenings in his family. He had not, then, that transcendent indifference to his relatives commonly attributed to him. But the hagiographical literature of the 17th and 18th centuries required a certain style."—Suau, *Histoire de S. François de Borgia,* Paris 1910, 142. Cf. *ibid.* pp. 477 f, and Karrer, *Der heilige Franz von Borja,* Frieburg 1921, pp. 383 f. The Blessed Thérèse, explained on her deathbed her devotion to the Ven. Théophane Vénard: "He is a little saint; there is nothing out of the common in his life. He loved the Immaculate Virgin very much and *his family too*—laying much stress on these last words. And so do I, she continued, I cannot understand those saints who did not."—*The Little Flower,* Eng. trans. (Dziewicki), ch. 12, pp. 257 f. Once more, saints differ.

[28] *Entretiens spirituels,* 8; cf. Eng. trans. (Gasquet and Mackey), *Spiritual Conferences,* No. 8., 1906, p. 124.

tions. While the particular way in which Fr. Doyle worked out the details of his advancement in virtue, with the amount of spiritual book-keeping involved, is suited to very few, we must not overlook what is permanent and universal in this method, apart from special developments adapted to individual cases. What is essential in this Ignatian method is to pin oneself down to a definite, enumerable or verifiable, achievement; to aim not at goodness in general but at *this much* goodness here and now; and not only to resolve but to examine, to look back as well as forward; to record objectively the results of these experiments in the laboratory of one's own soul. These are broad principles, not so much of spirituality as of psychology; and within their amplitude there is plenty of room for individuality and initiative.

Although grace worked very effectively and appreciably in Fr. Doyle's soul, it never dispensed him from what he called "hard, grinding work." Even in the case of that interior union which seemed to be so spontaneously natural in him, we can from his diary perceive how slow, painful and methodic were the means which he took to acquire and perfect such union. During his retreat of January, 1913, he wrote: "I feel drawn still more to the life of interior union. To acquire this I must practise the following:—

(1) Constant and profound recollection.
(2) To keep my thoughts always if possible centred on Jesus in my heart.
(3) To avoid worry and anxiety about future things.
(4) To avoid useless conversation.
(5) Great guard over my eyes, not reading or looking at useless things."

So, even in regions generally called mystic, he proceeded in that clear, systematic, one might say businesslike, way so characteristic of St. Ignatius. No vague yearnings after sublimities or ecstasies, no anxiety for the abnormal or singular, just a quiet persevering fidelity in small things and an unflinching determination to avail of those countless opportunities with which each day is strewn. To use an expressive phrase, St. Ignatius wishes us in our spiritual life to come to the

point; he will have no pious generalities; no beating about the bush. In my meditation I am "to reflect in order to derive some fruit"; in my prayer I am "to ask of God our Lord that which I wish and desire."

A few examples from Fr. Doyle's diary will help to bring out the intensely practical and definite way in which spiritual emotions and resolutions can be thus sharpened and applied. His Long Retreat resolutions have already been given. This is how he comments on them at a later stage (January, 1909): "Reading over my reflections and resolutions on the Third Degree during the Long Retreat, I see now they are little more than empty promises; they have produced no real change in my life. I put before myself 'always to choose the hard thing, to go against self in all things.' But have I really done so since? Has my life been more mortified from the time I made this resolution? Now, however, I am fully resolved no longer to 'beat the air,' but have drawn up a list of definite acts of self-denial by which I can test myself. If only I am faithful to these, I shall indeed have begun to lead a new and better life than formerly." And again in September, 1911, he writes: "The proposed vow has been in my mind constantly as if our Lord was determined that I should not escape even if I wished to do so. I see the need of it, in order to brace my weak yielding nature. In previous retreats I have made many generous resolutions, *e. g.* to seek my constant mortification in all things. But these have never really been kept for any length of time. I must henceforth leave no loophole for escape." There speaks the true Ignatian spirit of determination to bring high ideals down to concrete definite and feasible applications, to condense generalities into accessible facts.

This refusal to take refuge in vague emotions, this persistence in reducing oneself to the test of daily and hourly achievement, is also illustrated by "the book of little victories" which Fr. Doyle began in 1915. In this he entered one by one the acts of self-conquest and virtue which he performed, making sure that no day would be blank. Here, for instance, are a few of the entries for April: "Morning

discipline. Paper not read. Rose at night. Finished Office, very tired and sick. Slept on floor. Hour's visit to B. S. Hair-shirt. No fire. Made Holy Hour. Did not take sugar. Denied eyes several times. Wore waist chain." And so on, day after day. To those who indulge in pious velleities and general resolutions, this stream of precise applications may seem like a cold douche; but it is exceedingly healthy. On 13th June he pasted in his book a little picture of our Lady of Victories, and once more began the succession of daily victories, a veritable stream of bullets with himself as target. "Slept on the floor. No relief in small sufferings. Put on chain in bad humour. Violent temptation to eat cake and resisted several times. Two hours' prayer when weary. Rose for visit at two. Unkind story kept back. Overcame desire to lie in bed." Enough has now been quoted to illustrate the severely practical and methodical way in which Fr. Doyle aimed at holiness. There is here no question of impossible arithmetic, no head-splitting efforts at enumeration. Just a grim pertinacity of daily effort at reducing to practice some of the high ideals which a less systematic person would allow to evaporate. This, whether applied to prayer or to self-denial, is characteristic of Jesuit spirituality.[29]

This incisive, one might say militant, method of spirituality appealed very much to the fervent heart and chivalrous courage of Fr. Doyle. He believed in marshalling all his forces for the immediate present, in concentrating his energies on the holiness attainable here and now. In this strain he writes on the Feast of the Blessed Curé of Ars, 4th August, 1913: "Making my meditation before the picture of the Blessed, he seemed to say to me with an interior voice: The secret of my life was that *I lived for the moment*. I did not say, 'I must pray here for the next hour,' but only 'for this moment.' I did not say, 'I have a hundred confessions to hear,' but looked upon this one as the first and last. I did not say, 'I must deny myself everything and always,' but only 'just this once.' By this means I was able always to

[29] Compare St. Ignatius's saying: "Love ought to be found in deeds rather than words."—Contemplation for obtaining Love, *Spiritual Exercises*.

do everything perfectly, quietly and in great peace. Try and live this life of the present moment. Pray as if you had nothing else whatever to do; say your Office slowly as if for the last time; do not look forward and think you must often repeat this act of self-denial. This will make all things much easier." Two years later we find a similar entry: "No sacrifice would be great if looked at in this way. I do not feel now the pain which has passed, I have not yet to bear what is coming; hence I have only to endure the suffering of *this one moment,* which is quickly over and cannot return." [30]

This quantitative test of general principles by their number of daily applications, and this concentration of effort on each passing duty, need not in the least imply a multiplication of ascetic practices. Fr. Doyle, doubtless, imposed new applications and duties on himself; but he did so deliberately, in the interest of his work, not in spite of it; and he did not regard his personal practice as the standard for others. "No one is holy who is not fervent," he writes. "But the fervour of the holy is not an impetuous novitiate first-fervour, which does not and cannot last; it is not a fervour that multiplies resolutions and piles up pious practices that bow one to the ground in disgust and despair; it is not a fizzling ginger-beer fervour that disappears as soon as it appears; it is an ardent desire inspired by reason in the accomplishment of duty." There are, indeed, examples of souls who are best helped by a very minute and detailed system of practices; but in general such an elaboration would be a source of fatigue and disquiet.[31]

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[30] "Very near this, in a neighbouring parish, there was a little boy in bed, covered with sores, very ill and very miserable. I said to him, 'My poor child, you are suffering very much.' He answered me, 'No, sir, to-day I do not feel the pain I had yesterday, and to-morrow I shall not suffer from the pain I have now.' "—Curé of Ars, Catechism 21; Monnin, *Spirit of the Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. pp. 116 f; Monnin, *Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. 1924, p. 163. Citing this passage in a letter from the Front, Fr. Doyle remarks: "That lad was a philosopher, but he never lived in a trench. I bet!"

[31] S. J. Berchmans is an example of multiplicity. Fr. Martindale says, "John had a perfect right to commit himself to a system exacting minute and in the eyes of many tyrannical and coercive."—*In God's Army: Christ's Cadets,* 1917 [2], p. 128. Fr. Francis Piccolomini (afterwards General of the

Father William Doyle, S.J., Aberdeen, 1908.

It is similarly quite possible that in many cases the self-examination which is so prominent in Jesuit spirituality, may lead to morbid introspection and energy-paralysing scrupulosity. "Those anxious searchings of heart about advancing in perfection," says S. Francis de Sales,[32] "and those endeavours to see if we are advancing, are not at all pleasing to God, and only serve to satisfy our self-love—that subtle tormentor which grasps at so much but does almost nothing. One single good work done with a tranquil spirit is worth far more than several done with eagerness." "One cannot but wonder," writes the biographer of Fr. James Cullen,[33] and the remark applies with much greater force to his contemporary Fr. Doyle, "one cannot but wonder how the energy of his apostolic work, and even the energy of his interior striving to God, was not paralysed by his never-ceasing microscopic anxious examination of mind and heart." Yet, as a matter of fact, both these Irish Jesuits were strenuous missionaries and active apostles; what would have crippled and fettered other minds did but elevate and energise their labours. We may say of them what a Catholic physician has said of the pioneer nuns of North America: [34]

"They were strengthened, consoled, held up in trial by prayer; and it enabled them to tap layers of energy in their physical beings which they themselves scarcely knew they possessed, and concerning which other people were so dubious that they felt sure the workers would die young of exhausted vitality. Many wondered why some of them did not suffer from nervous prostration. Men and women of prayer seldom suffer from nervous prostration in the ordinary sense of the

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Society) gave friendly advice to Berchmans, who did not heed it as it did not emanate from a superior: "One day as he told me all he had done since the beginning of the day and all that he was going to add to these daily practises, I told him frankly that he could not continue long in leading this kind of life, and that he ought to be content with the principal things and to give up the practices which were of less importance, and that it was impossible to get from one tired brain so many minute details. What I foresaw happened only too soon."—Delahaye, *S. John Berchmans*, New York 1921, p. 86.

[32] *Spiritual Conferences* No. 7, Eng. trans. (Gasquet and Mackey), 1906, p. 112.

[33] L. McKenna, S. J., *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen*, 1924, p. 199.

[34] J. J. Walsh, M.D., *Religion and Health*, Boston 1920, pp. 50 f.

word; and what is called that in them is very often the manifestation of some organic ailment which has not been recognised."

S. Ignatius was certainly business-like, energetic and efficient. "He never undertook anything," says Nadal,[35] "which he did not carry through. In business matters he was most prompt and effective in execution." Yet "he was almost always intent on God, though he might seem to be doing something else;" [36] "every day he wrote what passed through his soul;" [37] he consulted God in prayer before coming to any decision; [38] and "he took such care with his conscience that he compared day with day, week with week, month with month, striving to advance every day." [39] Indeed, in the Society of Jesus, the two daily examinations of conscience are regarded as more important than even the morning meditation.[40]

Both the keeping of a spiritual diary and the examination of one's conscience to register progress involve some method of record and statistics. "There are," wrote Fr. Doyle once, "there are two patron saints to whom I have a tremendous devotion: a sheet of paper and a lead pencil. Mark down at least once a day everything you do and every time you do it. It will not make you proud to see all you do, but it will humble you by showing you all you don't do." Here are some of his own private resolutions on the subject:

"I have lost much in the past by not being faithful to daily marking acts of virtue." (September, 1910.)

"I have realised to-day the great loss I suffer by not constantly marking little acts on the watch; [41] it gives me an excuse for not performing little mortifications. Resolution:

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[35] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 471 f.
[36] *Ibid.* p. 523.
[37] *Ibid.* pp. 527, 97.
[38] *Ibid.* pp. 367, 515.
[39] *Ibid.* pp. 127, 150, 353, 523.
[40] *Const. S. J.* iv. 4, 3-4; Gagliardi, *De plena cognitione Instituti,* Rome 1844, p. 166.
[41] A small watch-like totalising instrument, often used by missioners for counting the number of confessions heard. More usually "particular examen beads," on which one can count up to forty, are used for examen.

Always to wear the watch and to mark the book each day." (Whit Sunday, 1911.)

"Always to carry the watch and to mark acts of self-denial, the minimum to be 200." (April, 1912.)

"Having given up the marking of little acts of self-denial, I again resumed it and only then realised how much I had fallen away. I see now how much I lose by not using the watch." (July, 1914.)

"I see the only chance of keeping this resolution is to mark daily what I do." (September, 1915.) [42]

In September, 1910, during his retreat, he chronicles a failure which will be an encouraging lesson to us. "The great defect in my character," he says, "and chief reason why I make so little progress is my want of fidelity. Thus in the past eighteen months I have not marked the ejaculations and acts of self-denial over three hundred times, which means that on these days I did none." A conclusion which is surely too severe, but which at least shows us the efficacy of "marking" our incipient efforts.

Fr. Doyle certainly took as much methodic care with his spiritual progress as a merchant takes with his accounts. The free and easy devotion commonly associated with some of the older schools of ascetics and mystics may suffice for those who are naturally good or lead lives of cloistered peace. S. Ignatius catered for men of affairs, for those with strongly developed characters, for people who, so to speak, were not natural saints. Hence his systematic application of business methods to the pursuit of holiness. "It would indeed be shameful," says Pope Pius X,[43] "if in this matter Christ's saying should be verified, that "the children of this world are wiser than the children of light" (*Luke* 16. 8.) We can

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[42] The Pia Unio Clericalis (Apostolic Union of Secular Priests), founded by Mgr. Lebeurier in 1862, was introduced into Ireland by Fr. Cullen. "One of its chief features is that each priest binds himself by promise to mark, upon a paper drawn up for the purpose, the way in which he has performed the chief priestly duties of the day, and to send this *ratio mensis* [monthly account] regularly at the end of the month to his spiritual adviser."—McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.*, 1924, p. 233.

[43] *Exhortatio ad Clerum Catholicum*, 4 Aug. 1908: *Actes de SS. Pie X*, (Bonne Presse) vi. 41 f.

observe with what diligence they look after their affairs; how often they balance their credit and debit; how accurately they make up their accounts; how they deplore their losses and so eagerly excite themselves to repair them." The extant records of Fr. Doyle's business—that of being a saint—show how seriously and systematically he worked.

He kept a special series of little books, his soul's account books one might call them, wherein he noted not only aspirations but mortifications in minute detail, column after column of figures. How literally and carefully he observed the Master's precept: "Trade till I come!" (S. Luke 19. 13.) How ready he must have been when the great Auditor came and the account was closed! One cannot but handle with reverence these booklets with their eloquent figures summing up years of faithful service and hidden struggle. Are they not transcribed in the Book of Life wherein our lives are written? Has not every tiny act of inspiration been adjudicated upon and perpetuated into an eternal worth?

General records and examinations will not, however, satisfy the relentlessly methodic and detailed Ignatius. *Vince teipsum* is not enough, he also adopts the policy of *divide et impera*. He did not, of course, invent the "particular examen," which attacks sins or faults one by one or essays the conquest of virtues in single file; but he helped to make it a widespread practice of the spiritual life. To eradicate some special sin or fault, S. Ignatius suggests "that each time a person falls into that particular sin or defect he lays his hand on his breast, repenting that he has fallen; and he can do this even in the presence of many people without their perceiving it." Moreover he wants us to write down twice a day the number of times we have fallen; he will not have us merely enter the total number, the faults must be represented graphically by parallel rows of points, so that we can at a glance compare day with day and week with week.[44] Such is the spiritual

[44] Subsequently this same method was extended to recording positive acts of virtue, instead of merely marking defects. Scupoli († 1610) recommended the striving after one virtue at a time"—*Pugna Spiritualis* c. 35, p. 325 ed. Lehmkuhl, Freiburg 1912. The particular examen is but another example of S. Ignatius's "specialism" referred to above p. 128, note. Even the pagan

accountancy of the writer of the Spiritual Exercises, who wishes us to apply to our souls the minute care with which business men keep their ledgers. Not everyone, of course, could or should literally follow all these details on every point; but there is in them an elemental method of the human mind, which we altogether neglect only at the peril of lapsing into unpractical dreaming, vague sentimentalism, and perhaps serious self-delusion.

According to one of his early commentators,[45] S. Ignatius "sometimes confuses a practice with the method of carrying it out. These must be so distinguished that, when the practice but not the method is suitable to all, the practice may be preserved but the method varied and accommodated to different people. For example, the examen for a particular fault is of the greatest importance for all; but the strict method of using those lines would be useless and even harmful to the scrupulous or to those who lack memory or imagination. Let these carry out their examen by some more useful method." S. Ignatius merely laid down the general rule of attempting one thing at a time and concentrating one's energy on an immediate objective. It is for each, under proper guidance, to apply this maxim of spiritual tactics to his own character and circumstances. Intensified into the compilation of spiritual statistics—such as Fr. Doyle adopted for his aspirations—the particular examen would certainly be unsuitable to many souls. In all such delicate matters of spiritual psychology there are no rigid general rules.

S. Ignatius, at any rate, laid great stress on the particular examen. He not only practised it himself,[46] but he explained it in greater detail than any other matter in the Spiritual Exercises, which, of course, were based on his own religious

Sextius practised a daily examination of conscience (Seneca, *De ira* iii 36 1). Cassian (*Collationes* v. 14) advocated the particular examen. (The word "examen" is hardly English, but it has become so customary in Catholic devotional literature that it would be pedantic to avoid it.) Benjamin Franklin (who presumably never read the Spiritual Exercises) practised this method and kept a graphical record of particular faults—*Autobiography* ch. 6: Sparks, *Life and Works of B. F.*, 1 (1856) 107.

[45] A. Gagliardi S.J. († 1607), *Commentarii seu Explanationes in Exercitia Spiritualia*, Bruges 1882, p. 5.

[46] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 523.

experience.[47] In the very barest scheme to which he will allow the Exercises to be reduced, the particular examen still finds a place; and he takes it for granted that "a man engaged in public affairs or necessary business matters or connected with letters or industry" will need it.[48] The Directory (xiii. 4) tells us that "after the Exercises are over it ought to be practised all one's life." "Do you wish to know," asks Père de Ravignan,[49] "to what we can reduce all the resolutions of a retreat? To making our particular examen faithfully each day." We usually find the practice prominent in Jesuit lives; [50] and we may illustrate Fr. Doyle's attitude thereto from the life of his contemporary fellow-religious, Fr. James Cullen, "many of whose old particular examen books, with every day filled in, were found in his room. He had begun the practice of the particular examen early in his Enniscorthy days (as a secular priest), and continued it up to his entry into the Society, when of course it became of obligation." "If it were done as it should be done," said Fr. Cullen, "all the 'additions' of it being observed with fidelity and fervour, it would cut any external fault out of my life in fourteen days." He applied it also to the acquiring of virtues, for we find him writing in his old age: "I shall be eighty in a few days and I feel it! . . . I am making my particular examen on acts of pure love of God, and I find it helps me greatly in the passing hours." [51]

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[47] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

[48] Annotations 18 and 19.

[49] *Pensées choisies*, ed. C. Renard, S.J., Paris 1918 [3], p. 142. "No one should go out of retreat without his mind made up on the subject of his particular examen."—Rickaby, *The Spiritual Exercises*, 1915, p. 56.

[50] Goldie, *Life of S. John Berchmans*, 1912 [7], pp. 143 f; Ven. Claude de la Colombière, *Lights in Prayer* (Quarterly Series), 1914, p. 158; De la Puente, *Vida del V. P. Baltasar Alvarez*, ii. 2, p. 33 (Madrid 1920). Père Ginhac once surprised his superior, who was confessing to him, by the unexpected query: "And what about your particular examen? Do you make it properly? What is the subject of it?"—*A Man After God's Own Heart*, p. 282. The "rules for the prefect of spiritual things" (No. 3) tell him to "ask what method they have in their prayer and examen and whether they are making the particular examen against some defect."

[51] McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.*, 1924, pp. 200, 243. Cf. p. 141: "He directs for years together his particular examen to this perpetual keeping in God's presence." "My work must be soaked in prayer," he said (p. 149).

The chief application which Fr. Doyle made of the method of the particular examen was to the making of aspirations, the use of which he found extremely helpful in going-against-himself and in acquiring union with God in all his actions. It was especially by momentary recollection and ejaculatory prayer that he sought to sanctify the passing moment and to condense perfection into the immediate present. When he was tempted to break a resolution, or when he shrank from some sacrifice he used to say five times to himself, "Will you refuse to do this for the love of Jesus?" By means of aspirations he sharpened his will into instant action and brought into play all the accumulated motive-power of the past. "This morning," he writes in his diary (Sept. 1915), "I lay awake powerless to overcome myself and to make my promised visit to the chapel. Then I felt prompted to pray; I said five aspirations and rose without difficulty. How many victories I could win by this easy and powerful weapon!" [52] Indeed he had a wonderful idea of the value of aspirations as a source of grace and merit. "Great light at meditation," he writes, "on the value of one aspiration. If I knew I should receive £1 for each one I made, I would not waste a spare moment. And yet I get infinitely more than this, though I often fail to realise it." During the last few years of his life Fr. Doyle's conviction of the value of aspirations steadily grew; and with him to believe was to act.[53] The number of aspirations which he contrived to fit into one day advanced from 10,000 to over 100,000. This latter astounding figure was reached while he was actually engaged in the arduous duties of military chaplain at the Front. As he never revealed this to anyone and as the achievement seems rather incredible, it

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[52] "In the morning," resolves Marcus Aurelius (5.1), "when you find it hard to get up, think this to yourself: I am getting up to do a man's work." The Christian ascetic gets up to do *God's* work.

[53] The following aspirations, jotted down in one of Fr. Doyle's notebooks, seem to have been favourites of his: (1) My Crucified Jesus, help me to crucify myself. (2) Lord, teach me how to pray and pray always. (3) Jesus, Thou Saint of Saints, make me a saint. (4) Blessed be God for all things. (5) My loving Jesus within my heart, unite my heart to Thee. (6) Heart of Jesus, give me Your zeal for souls. (7) My God, Thou art omnipotent, make me a saint.

will be well to extract from his diaries and to give here the references and resolutions concerning aspirations. These, it should be remembered, were written solely for his own use.[54]

"I felt urged to-day to make an effort to reach 10,000 aspirations each day; if I fall short, to make up the number at another time. This would mean three and a half million acts in the year. How much grace and holiness that would mean! I have so much lost time to make up." (21st Sept., 1911.)

"During a visit to D—— I made a strong resolution, cost what it may, every day to make 10,000 ejaculations (since increased to 12,000). I have never realised before so clearly how much I was losing by not doing so." (22nd April, 1912.)

"Novena to Blessed Curé d'Ars. Resolved to bear small pains and make 20,000 aspirations." (26th July, 1913.)

"Constant urging of Jesus to make every effort to reach 20,000 aspirations daily." (18th July, 1914.)

"25,000 aspirations; if possible, 10,000 before lunch." (Resolution on New Year's Day, 1915.)

"I made a vow, in honour of Soeur Thérèse, for the rest of my life to make every day 10,000 aspirations, unless sick." (3rd March, 1915.)

"Jesus said to me: 'You must make your life a martyrdom of prayer.' This means that I must give every spare moment to aspirations etc.—generously banishing idle thoughts in which I indulge so much—trying to make 50,000 daily. I must also increase very much the time I spend in the chapel." (1st May, 1916.)

"Feast of the Seven Dolours. Said Mass in St. Colette's home at Corbie. While visiting the chapel where she was a

[54] The following typical figures, giving the number of recorded daily aspirations at different periods, are taken from the booklets wherein Fr. Doyle made such entries: 1,300, Jan. 1909; 2,000, May 1909; 3,000, Oct. 1909; 4,000, Nov. 1910; 5,000, Jan. 1911; 6,000, July 1911; 10,000, Sept. 1911; 15,000, May 1912; 20,000, Aug. 1913; 60,000, Oct. 1914; 90,000, Nov. 1914. These figures give some of the actual numbers recorded at his daily examination. That the task was not easy is shown by his many relapses and the constant resolutions he made. See his first extant resolution, made during the Long Retreat, p. 83.

recluse for four years, again I felt most strongly urged to make the 50,000 aspirations *the* penance of my life, and to force myself no matter at what cost, to get through them daily. I have made this resolve: that if this is impossible, I will make up the number later on." (15th Sept., 1916.)

"It seemed to me that it would please our Lord to try and make up for all the aspirations I might have made during the early years of my religious life. At the rate of 10,000 a day for 15 years this would amount to fifty-four million. I have promised Him to pay this back, counting anything over the usual 50,000 aspirations each day. It is a huge amount to face, but with His grace I shall accomplish my task, more especially as I have proved it is possible to do 100,000 daily with a little energy and courage. If He preserves my life during this war, I must work with might and main for Him in gratitude. This grace I owe to my darling Mother Mary, who has put this thought into my mind to-day, Saturday." (2nd Nov., 1916.)

"Again a clear interior light that God wants me to aim at the 100,000 aspirations daily. I feel a longing to take up this life of unceasing prayer and at the same time a dread and a loathing of this burden, for I must watch every spare minute of the day to perform my penance. I feel Jesus asks this in reparation for His priests. With the help of our Blessed Lady I have this day begun the big fight." (13th Dec., 1916.)

"The conviction is steadily growing stronger that I am doing what God wants specially from me by making the 100,000 aspirations. I have not experienced much trouble in doing so for the past twelve days." (1st January, 1917.)

"I find I am falling off in the 100,000 aspirations. Have bound myself for a week by vow to make the full number. (1st Feb., 1917.)

"I have made a bargain with our Lord to give me a soul for every 1,000 aspirations made over the daily 100,000." (13th Feb., 1917.)

Thus we learn from these intimate confessions that Fr. Doyle regarded this practice as *the* penance of his life,

that he had to watch every spare minute of the day to perform this penance, that it was a burden for which he felt dread and loathing, and that nevertheless he was ultimately able "with a little energy and courage" to make a hundred thousand aspirations in the day. How he accomplished this marvellous feat must remain something of a psychological mystery, for we have no further evidence or details. It is clear that he thus utilised every spare moment; whenever he was waiting for someone, whenever he was travelling alone or even passing along the house, he occupied himself in saying his beads or in ejaculatory prayer. But even at the rate of fifty aspirations a minute it would take over thirty-three hours to make a hundred thousand ejaculations. And, even allowing for every possible encroachment on his hours of sleep, the twenty-four hours of Fr. Doyle's day were well filled with exterior work, not to speak of necessary recreation and social obligations. It seems clear, then, that his aspirations were made concurrently with his other work, as well as in his leisure, and that their number was estimated in some way, without resorting to an individual count.

Fr. Doyle was naturally a zealous advocate of this practice for others. "There is nothing," he said in a letter, "there is nothing better than the practice of aspirations, steadily growing in number. Keep a little book and enter them once a day. . . . I would like you to keep count of these little acts like the aspirations, but don't go too fast; build up and do not pull down." He realised, of course,—though perhaps not sufficiently clearly in one or two cases—that the systematic piling up of aspirations to reach an arithmetically defined goal might be extremely unsuitable to many minds. His views were, in fact, very prudent and tolerant. This is advice which he gave in February, 1912: "As to any practice of piety there is a double danger: recommending it as infallible, or condemning it as useless. I always make a point of saying that all things are not for all people. Characters differ so much. . . . My own experience, and that of many others, is that the beads for marking aspirations are an invaluable help; for if there is

not a definite number of acts marked or counted somehow, you will very soon find that very few are done. I think you have found the benefit of counting twenty acts of self-denial; so if you like, do the same for aspirations, increasing slowly, not too many at first—and no straining." "As regards counting the aspirations," he similarly wrote to another penitent in July, 1914, "if you really find that it is a strain on your tired head, give up the practice."

It is indeed perfectly obvious that beyond a certain total—say forty or fifty a day—this arithmetical application of the Ignation method to aspirations, or other acts of virtue, will in normal cases produce very injurious results. Any unnatural strain or tension will ruin that cheerful spontaneity and elastic freshness which is so essential to religious life. Moreover, an undue stress on the merely numerical aspect of prayer may lead to a serious depreciation of more important qualities.[55] *How* we pray is a far more vital problem than *how much* we pray; intensity is preferable to extension. "When you are praying, speak not much as the heathens; for they think that in their much speaking they may be heard." (*S. Matthew* 6. 7.) There is a spiritual lesson for us, too, in that exquisite little scene of Jesus sitting down and watching the people putting their offerings into the temple-chests. He made no comment on the many generous donors who came; but when a poor widow came with her two farthings—surely the Master was waiting for her—He called His disciples to teach them a new principle of valuation, as applicable to the spiritual as to the material life. The widow's contribution was the highest in God's sight, because "she of her want cast in all she had, even her whole living." (*S. Mark* 12. 44.) Jesus is still sitting nigh and watching as we make our offerings. We may not be able to pray or

[55] "You must not then prescribe for yourself the making of a certain number of genuflections, ejaculatory prayers or similar practices every day or during any particular time, without telling the Superior; although you must be very faithful in your practice of raising your heart to God and of making ejaculations."—S. Francis de Sales, *Spiritual Conferences,* No. 10, Eng. trans. (Gasquet & Mackey), 1906, p. 176.

do much, but if we in our want cast in all we have, even our whole living, if what little we give is given wholeheartedly, we need not fear the judgement of Him who cherishes the mites of the weak.

But while thus emphasising principles and asserting liberty in the choice of means, we must not assume that what may be called a numerical spirit of devotion is always reprehensible. "Some good Christians," says the Curé of Ars,[56] "are in the habit of saying, 'I will make so many acts of the love of God, so many sacrifices, to-day.' . . . I like that practice very much." There have been many saints and holy souls who have found help in such calculations and repetitions. S. Gertrude, for example, often repeated a prayer 365 times, sometimes 5,466 times.[57] S. Alphonsus, when an old man, used, before going to sleep, make "ten acts of love, ten acts of confidence, ten acts of contrition, ten acts of conformity to the will of God, ten acts of love for Jesus Christ, ten acts of love for the Madonna, ten acts of love for the Blessed Sacrament, ten acts of confidence in Mary, ten acts of resignation in suffering, ten acts of abandonment to Jesus and Mary, ten prayers to do the will of God." [58] Father Diego Martinez, the Jesuit apostle of Peru, used to say "Deo gratias" four to six hundred times a day and to make three to four thousand daily acts of love, which he recorded and added twice every day.[59] Except in the prodigious totals reached, which we shall presently try to explain,

[56] Monnin, *Spirit of the Curé of Ars,* Eng. trans. (no date), p. 188.

[57] *Legatus divinae pietatis* iii. 9, iv. 23, etc. She believed that the number of wounds received by Christ when scourged was 5,466.—*Liber specialis gratiae* i. 35 and vii. 8. We read of numerical devotions (50 litanies, 900 rosaries, 3,000 strokes of the discipline, 33 days fast, etc.) in the *Life of S. Rose of Lima,* by J Feuillet, O. P. Eng. trans. 1873 [2], p. 85. S. Patrick tells he used to make "a hundred prayers in the day and about as many in the night" when he was a herdsman.—*Confessions,* 16. The Rule of S. Comgall, founder and first abbot of Bangor, prescribed two (or three) hundred prostrations every day.—*Eriu* 1 (1904) 197.

[58] A. Berthe, *Life of S, Alphonsus de' Liguori,* Eng. trans. (H. Castle), Dublin 1905, ii. 584 f. "During these latter years," we are told, "his aspirations towards God were so frequent that his days consisted of one act of love which lasted from morning till night."

[59] A. Nadal, S.J., *De caelesti conversatione* i. 3, Andegavi 1861, p. 52. A Fr. James Cerruti used to renew his vows 3,000 times a day. "Similar facts are frequently recorded in the eulogies of Ours."—*Ibid.*

there is therefore nothing specially singular in Fr. Doyle's arithmetical records of his mortifications and prayers.

There is not the smallest trace of any strain or of any fetich of mere numbers. In enumerating his aspirations he did not mean to fill his life with a series of discontinuous and separate acts, but rather to make this succession of little impulses melt into one continuous note of heaven's music. His ideal was not so much formal prayer as an uninterrupted prayerfulness. "I felt strongly," he writes on 25th January, 1912, "that Jesus wants me to work with might and main to acquire the 'interior union,' so that not for one moment would I forget His presence within me." No doubt, Fr. Doyle, partly out of a desire for mortification, hammered out his enormous burden of aspirations with a degree of strenuous endurance which would have left most people limp and prostrate. Here precisely is the personal element which we must carefully avoid unthinkingly transferring into our own lives. And perhaps—for we know but little—perhaps we are really exaggerating the violence or the numerical precision of his efforts? At any rate he himself often advised his spiritual children to cultivate rather a habitual conviction of God's nearness, an effortless restful sense of companionship. These are two typical extracts from such letters:

"I think our Lord wants your whole day to be one continued act of love and union with Him *in your heart,* which has no need of words to express it. Your attitude ought to be that of the mother beside the cot of her babe, lost in love and tenderness, but saying nothing, just letting the heart speak, though the wee one cannot know it as Jesus does. There is nothing more sanctifying than this life, which few, I fear, reach to, since it means a constant effort to bring back our wandering imagination."

"By all means follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit and do not bind yourself to anything which you find a hindrance. Just let yourself 'sink into God' when in His presence. Don't try to pray in words, but love Him—which, of course, is the highest prayer—and then abandon yourself to His pleasure, whether that be consolation or darkness. . . . In the matter

of prayer always try to follow the attraction of the Holy Spirit. . . . Try to keep our divine Lord company in your heart all day long, thinking of Him within you—a union which will bring you many graces and make His presence much more real."

"It is clear," says Père de Grandmaison,[60] "that a man of such principles and practices as these could not consider the mechanical repetition of material acts or formulas as a very sanctifying effort, wished and demanded by God. Now it seems psychologically impossible that the numerical multiplication of formulated aspirations beyond a certain measure should not extinguish, or at least overpower, the spirit. Each one can make the experiment on the shortest of ejaculatory prayers, the name of Jesus; it is not easy to say it humanly more than three or four hundred times in five minutes; it is difficult to kiss piously the feet of a crucifix more than three or four hundred times in five minutes. Hence, without taking into account the increasing fatigue which would soon make intolerable the repetition of such acts, for 4,000 to 5,000 of these aspirations an hour would be required, ten hours for 50,000, twenty hours for 100,000—*without doing anything else.*"

Fr. Doyle obviously did much else; so we must reject the possibility of his fitting into his busy day a hundred thousand distinct devotional thoughts, acts or ejaculations, *separately enumerated.* Under the heading of aspiration he probably included not only momentary prayers, but also every deliberate movement and activity done in God's presence.[61] He did not waste energy in trying to count such acts individually; just as he discouraged in others an excessive preoccupation with the gaining of indulgences. "As regards indulgences attached to prayers," he once wrote to a penitent of his, "I think it is best always to follow one's attraction in these matters and not to bother much about the indulgences." The writer of such advice was not likely to bother much about weird and

[60] *Revue d' ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 135.
[61] On aspirations as motions of the will see further on page 368, 373 ff.

wearisome calculations. He must have used arithmetic merely as a ready and graphical record of his progress in mental concentration and of his growth in union with God.

The reference to indulgences suggests a possible meaning for Fr. Doyle's evaluations. A simple invocation may gain an indulgence of "three hundred days" or even of "seven years and seven quarantines." He may have similarly attached some conventional numerical value to certain aspirations or acts.[62] In a retreat to priests he pointed out that the ordinary Office contained about 12,000 words; and it is very probable that he himself regarded each word devoutly said as an aspiration. Hence certain duties such as Mass, Office and Rosary were probably reckoned at some numerical value corresponding to the average words contained. And the remaining aspirations were perhaps counted with the help of a "watch"—a litle instrument sometimes used by missioners for numbering confessions.[63] "I have a little system of my own for counting my prayers," writes Fr. Doyle when a chaplain at the Front (March, 1917.) "To represent it by figures, the 10,000 before the war has grown to 100,000 daily now; with the result that He has entered into my life as He had never done before." Whatever may have been his "little system," it has served to record for us the increasingly con-

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[62] Before the aspirations quoted on pp. 206 ff, the word "five" is written; before the following the word "ten" is written: "Dear Jesus, influence my heart with that fiery zeal for souls You came on earth to enkindle." Even if Fr. Doyle enlarged the usual meaning of "aspirations," he certainly included ordinary aspirations. Under the date 11th Feb., 1912, the following curious entry occurs in his diary: "I feel urged to spend all the time I can before the Blessed Sacrament, always to say my 'rosary of ejaculations' and beads in the chapel, in spite of the repugnance I have to do this."

[63] He seems however to have used this exclusively for recording acts of self-denial; see pages above. We read in his diary for 28 Jan., 1911: "Resolved from now to count every little act of self-denial, *e.g.* five minutes of chain, one stroke of discipline, etc. Will regard nothing as too small." On the day before he counted 90 acts of self-denial, on that day 210. The following annual totals were completed by Fr. Doyle himself. Mortifications —11,442 for 1910; 46,800 for 1911. Aspirations—615,100 for 1910; 2,100,000 for 1911. It is significant that the lowest unit in the case of aspirations is 50; and even this does not occur after 7 June, 1909 (the entry for that day being 1,550). After 7 Feb., 1915 the unit of measurement ceases to be 100 and becomes 1,000.

tinuous and intimate way in which Christ entered into his life.

However interpreted, the figures—ranging from 1,000 daily in 1907 to 120,000 in 1917—bear witness to a slow struggle and a painful effort on Fr. Doyle's part. It is quite impossible to explain them as merely the development of a covenant with God that all his actions should be regarded as aspirations of love. We find such a covenant in the Prayers of S. Gertrude and S. Mechtilde: "O Almighty God, I sanctify, dedicate and consecrate to Thee every beating of my heart and every pulsation of my blood; and I desire to make this compact with Thee that their every beating shall say to Thee, 'Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Sabaoth.' "[64] Fr. Vincent Carafa, S. J., advocates a similar compact: "I desire that the medium of the expression of my love be not my heart and tongue alone, but every gesture, every step I take, every act of my soul, every action of my body. And I wish that this treaty between us be a lasting and binding one; for ever valid and effective between two hearts, Thine, my God, and mine. . . . In virtue of this agreement, all my words, all my steps, all my thoughts, all my movements, all my longings, every breath I breathe, every beat of my heart, all will be so many acts of love for my God."[65] However laudable such a loving compact may be, it does not convert actions and movements into actual conscious aspirations, nor does it add to them a moral quality susceptible of numerical estimation. On the other hand, we must not so exaggerate the arithmetical record as to regard Fr. Doyle's daily life as a congeries of discontinuous jerks and spurts. By means of some "little system" unknown to us, the growing intensity of his unitive

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[64] Eng. trans. (T. A. Pope), new ed. 1917, p. 4. Cf. S. Gertrude, *Legatus divinae pietatis* iv. 2; Bl. John Eudes, *Le royaume de Jésus* i. 4, *Oeuvres complètes* 1 (1905) 105 (Eng. trans. of Abbé Granger's abridgement, *The Reign of Jesus*, 1911, p 105).

[65] *School of Divine Love* ii. 33, Eng. trans. Dublin 1886, pp: 159 f. Cf. the practice of J. Valderavana, S.J. cited in A. Nadal, S.J., *De caelesti conversatione* i. 18, *Andegavi* 1861 p. 177. The Jansenist Pierre Nicole not unfairly criticised this practice.—Brémond, *Hist. litt. du sentiment religieux en France* 4 (1920) 357.

life and of his victim-vocation was correlated with, and expressed by, a series of increasing numbers, which represented for him the extent and frequency of prayer and self-denial in his daily life.[66]

[66] Some further light is thrown on the meaning of his numerical totals by the heading "No Butter," under which during May and June, 1914, we find such daily numbers as 171, 192, 211; obviously such numbers cannot signify the *number of times* each day he refrained from taking butter. In 1913 we find daily numbers representing the number of *minutes* during which he wore a spiked chain round his waist. On 18th. December, 1911, there occurs the entry: "Began to mark number of minutes, not prescribed by rule, spent before the B. Sacrament."

Chapter VII

THE MYSTIC

(1.) aspirations

THE practice of ejaculatory prayer, so suited to the apostolic life, has always been held in high esteem in the Society of Jesus. "As in the Society," wrote Claudius Acquaviva when General,[1] "the tranquillity of holy contemplation was most frequently interrupted by the numerous disturbances of work, our holy Father Ignatius desired that, wherever situated and however enmeshed in the chains of work, Ours should by frequent aspirations fly mentally to God and find Him everywhere present; and that they should consider this the best method of prayer, since they thus directed all their actions to the worship and greater glory of God." Ignatius himself never began any work without prayer and recommended this practice to others. "Do not speak," he advised,[2] "do not reply, do not meditate, do not walk, do nothing whatever, without first thinking if it pleases God, if it is of example and edification to your neighbour." "Receive with great charity," he told Fr. Manares,[3] "those who come to you for help or consolation. But, after you have been called or when going, always say some ejaculatory prayer, asking God to deign to help that soul through you. And then collect all your thoughts and words to help your visitor in spirit. Thus you will not be uselessly distracted, but you will rather make progress." He had on another occasion to praise and uphold the practice of ejaculatory prayer, when combating the views of a certain "mystic" in the Society, who held that any real prayer must last uninterruptedly for two hours or more.[4] This intermingling of work with aspirations has

[1] *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium*, Roulers 1909 [2], i. 256 f. Suarez (*De oratione* ii. 5, 5) praises the practice of short mental prayers during work.

[2] Selecta Documenta No. 4: *Epistolae* 12 (1911) 679.

[3] *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 515.

[4] *Epistolae* 12 (1911) 651 f. He cites Cassian (*De institutis renuntiantium* ii. 10): The fathers of the desert "think it best that prayers should be short

always been recommended and practised in the Society as one of "the means which join man as an instrument with God" and as leading to that "familiarity with God in the spiritual exercises of devotion" so necessary in apostolic life.[5] "It is proper," says Gagliardi,[6] "that outside the ordinary time of prayer Ours should be able to be very easily raised to God through ejaculatory prayers; and this even in the midst of their work, as is recounted of Ignatius who readily raised his mind to God at the blessing at table or on seeing flowers. And thus Ours will not be less united to God in action than in meditation itself." "This meditation which so happily begins the day," says Fr. Carafa as General,[7] "must, of course, be followed by frequent aspirations to God, by which the whole day may be interspersed."

These aspirations are obviously not intended to interfere with active work. "Such prayer," says S. Francis de Sales, "may be interwoven with all our business and occupations without hindering them in the slightest degree; indeed our external pursuits are rather helped than hindered by spiritual retreat and short devotions of the soul." "This habit of spiritual retirement and ejaculatory prayer," he adds, "is the keystone of devotion and can supply the defects of all your other prayers; but nothing else can supply its place." [8] S. Alphonsus was certainly a diligent worker; every day "for five hours he continued to labour at his different works; but

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but offered up very frequently." Cf. Juan de Castaniza O.S.B († 1598), *Spiritual Conquest* maxim 21, Eng. trans. (ed. Vaughan) 1874, pp 406 f.

[5] *Constitutiones S.J.*, p. 10, n. 2; ed. de la Torre, p. 284. Similarly (*Const.* ix. 2, 1; p. 256) "among the various gifts with which it is desirable that the General should be adorned, this is first of all: that he should be most closely joined and familiar with God our Lord both in prayer and in all his actions." Cf. S. Ignatius's views on prayer-filled work given above pp. 24 f.

[6] A Gagliardi S.J. († 1607), *De plena cognitione Instituti*, Rome 1844, p. 165.

[7] *On the means for preserving the primitive Spirit of the Society*, Rome 1646. Fr. Carafa himself made daily thousands of aspirations; he had a special prayer for every quarter of an hour, special prayers for walking through the streets, downstairs to the parlour, etc.—Bartoli, *Vie du R. P. V. Carafe* (French trans. by Père Le Blanc), Lyons 1653, pp. 365 f.

[8] *Introduction to the Devout Life* ii. 13, Eng. trans. (Richards), 1878, pp. 81 f, 87. Cf. *Treatise on the Love of God* xii. 9 (Eng. trans. Mackey, 1884, pp. 546 f.): "The exercise of continual aspirations is very useful for vivifying all our works with love; but especially does it most abundantly suffice for all the small and ordinary actions of our life."

his study did not prevent him from remaining united with God or multiplying acts of love and ejaculatory prayers; he used to say continually, 'My God, Thou knowest that I love Thee and am working for Thee.' "[9] Similar examples are to be found in the lives of members of the Society of Jesus. "I find the use of ejaculatory prayers very helpful," writes a modern American Jesuit to his sister.[10] "Begin by making a determination to say a certain number, not too many at first, before the midday, and again before the night examen. Then week after week try to advance the number, and you will be surprised to find that your life seems to be made up of ejaculations. This is by no means beyond our reach, if we are faithful and zealous. Is not this the life of recollection we want, and that which active saints led? Nor will your work suffer in any way; on the contrary it will help to concentrate and spiritualise everything you do. For is it not because we do not keep in mind the motive of our actions that they are done in a purely material way?" Here we have, almost in identical words, the advice and practice of Fr. Doyle.

We must not regard this habit of ejaculations, at least in its higher stages, as a kind of mechanical juxtaposition of short prayer-intervals and long stretches of work. It may indeed laudably remain so for those who can only pray in spurts and are unable without strain or worry to make their work coincident with actual prayer. "The quantity of anything," says S. Thomas,[11] "should be proportioned to the end in view, as the quantity of drink should be proportioned to health. Hence it is fitting that prayer should continue only for so long as is useful to excite the fervour of interior desire. But when prayer goes beyond this measure so that it cannot be continued without weariness, then it should not be further prolonged." And elsewhere[12] he says: "That an act in a

[9] Berthe, *Life of S. Alphonsus de' Liguori*, Eng. trans. (Castle), Dublin 1905, i. 658 f.

[10] Spillane, *Life and Letters of Henry Van Rensselaer S.J.*, New York 1908, pp. 213 f.

[11] *Summa theol.* 2.2, q 83, a 14.

[12] *De malo*, q 2, a 5, ad 11.

person possessing charity should be meritorious, it is not necessary that it should be actually referred to God; it is sufficient that it be referred actually to some fitting end which is habitually referred to God."

There have been souls, however, who have attained a wonderful combination of interior prayer and exterior work. Blessed John Eudes, writing about himself in the third person, tells us that he knows a person "who by the frequent use of this exercise (of aspirations) has arrived at such a stage that it is easy for him, even when taking his meals, to make actually almost as many acts of love for Jesus as he places morsels in his mouth. This he does not only without strain or trouble or inconvenience, but he is not thereby prevented from talking and taking recreation." "I say this," he continues, "not that you should do the same, for there would immediately be an outcry that I was asking things too difficult; but that you may know how much power there is in a holy habit, and how wrong the world is in imagining so much difficulty and bitterness where there is merely every kind of sweetness and delight."[13] We read of a similar marvellous concentration in the life of the sixteenth-century Mexican hermit, Gregory Lopez, whose favourite aspiration was "Thy will be done." "He repeated this continually, if not with his lips, at least with his mind. For the space of three years he never once failed to make this prayer with every breath he drew. Whether he ate or drank or worked or rested, these words ever rose to his lips or ascended like the sweet odour of incense from his heart when his lips could not form them into articulate speech. As soon as he woke from sleep, his first thought embodied itself in the words, 'Thy will be done'; and from that moment till sleep again stole away his consciousness, they arose continually before the throne of God from the glowing heart of His loving servant."[14] "We

[13] *Le royaume de Jésus* vi. 19 (Eng. trans. pp. 121 f.): *Oeuvres* 1 (1905) 453 f. Cf. *Life of Mother Margaret Mary Hallahan*, 1870 [3], p. 403: "Aspirative prayer is to me almost as natural as to breathe, and God is ever soliciting me to closer union with Him."

[14] Canon Doyle, O.S.B., *Life of Gregory Lopez*, 1876, p. 22. "After thus repeating them for the space of three years and dwelling upon and as it were

cannot do these things," says Fr. Faber,[15] "but it makes us love God more to know that He has raised up men who could."

In this last case it seems clear that the aspirations did not really involve *words* at all, but were rather those motions of the will so much recommended by mystical writers. The author of the "Cloud of Unknowing," a fourteenth-century English treatise, lays great stress on "stirrings," "speedily springing unto God as a sparkle from the coal":

"Even so many willings or desirings, no more nor no fewer, may be and are in one hour in thy will as are atoms in one hour. And if thou wert reformed by grace to the first state of man's soul as it was before sin, then shouldst thou evermore be lord of that stirring or of those stirrings; so that none should go amiss but all should stretch unto the sovereign desirable and unto the highest willable thing, the which is God. . . . And it is marvellous to number the stirrings that may be in one hour wrought in a soul that is disposed to this work. And yet, in one stirring of all these, it may have suddenly and perfectly forgotten all created things. But fast after each stirring, through the corruption of the flesh, it falleth down again to some thought or to some done or undone deed. But what matter? For fast after, it riseth again as suddenly as it did before." [16]

As there were supposed to be 22,560 "atoms" in an hour, it will be seen that this writer not only regards aspirations as essential to the mystical life, but gives them a numerical

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drawing all the hidden sweetness and divine efficacy from these inspired words, Gregory by the impulse of the Holy Spirit advanced to another exercise. This time it was not one of words or affections to which God moved him, but of works done out of charity for his neighbor." Cf. *ibid.* p 193. Cf. also S. Mary Magdalene de' Pazzi, *Life* by Cepari, ch. 47, Eng. trans. 1849, p. 230.

[15] *All for Jesus* ch. 6, sect. 6, p. 182.

[16] *Cloud of Unknowing,* ch. 4., ed. J. McCann, O.S.B., 1924, pp. 14, 18 f. Cf. *Letters of Archbishop Ullathorne,* 1892, pp. 287 f: "Beat with your brief aspirations of love against the Divine Cloud; and though you see not the way which these spiritual arrows from your heart will reach, yet they will pass through the cloud into the bosom of your God. And what will an hour of this exercise produce? Time is the measure of the motions of the will; give to each motion of the soul its instant, allow that instant even the full length of a second, and an hour will comprise 3,600 acts of divine love. How much of the clouded past will this cover, and how much of the heavy future will it lighten, and how much of God's love will it not win over!"

valuation far surpassing that of Fr. Doyle. These "stirrings," it should be noted, are motions of the will. In his commentary Ven. Aug. Baker says that "these aspirations are a certain greedy longing or thirsting after God out of love" and that "aspirations and elevations of the will are without all corporal images and are above the imagination." Elsewhere [17] he tells us that "internal prayer proper to the state of active contemplation consists of certain most purely spiritual operations of the will, longing and thirsting after God and a union with Him in the supreme point of the spirit where His most proper dwelling is." We may not, therefore, always interpret aspirations as vocal prayers, when we find them mentioned in spiritual treatises and biographies; nor may we regard numerical estimates of their numbers as implying more than a vivid way of *subsequently* recording what was practically a continuous union of will.

We find in fact that the aspirations, so much recommended by Ignatius, are often described and interpreted by his followers as a growing union with Christ in daily life. "If you become accustomed in Christ," writes one of his early companions,[18] "you can easily, when you are doing other things, have your heart united to God, not only habitually or virtually but by simple prayer." "Christ is so to be found," he writes elsewhere in his notes,[19] "that we should feel in everything what Christ would do here or what He present would advise, as if we felt Christ dwelling in us. . . . Diligently receive and exercise the union, given by the Spirit of the Lord, with Christ Jesus and His powers, so that you feel in spirit that you understand through His understanding, will through His will, remember through His memory, and altogether that you exist and live and work, not in yourself but in Christ. This is the highest perfection of the present time, divine virtue, admirable sweetness." Similarly Fr. de la Puente writes in his private notebook: "At another time it seemed to me that, God being united with

[17] Baker, *Holy Wisdom* iii. 4, 2; ed. Abbot Sweeney, 1876, pp. 509 f.
[18] *Epistolae P. Hieronymi Nadal* 4 (1905) 722.
[19] *Ibid.* pp. 684, 697. This indwelling of Christ is, of course, as God.

me in order to work, we were no longer two, but one—like the soul and body *seclusa informatione;* because we are so much one that I never set about my work without God doing so with me." [20]

It has already been shown [21] that it is precisely this sense of Christ's indwelling which was the meaning and ideal of Fr. Doyle's aspirations both for himself and for others. "Jesus wants me to work with might and main," he writes in his diary (25th January, 1912), "to acquire the 'interior union,' so that not for one moment would I forget His presence within me." He describes the following significant incident in an intimate letter written on 12th July, 1912:

"On Wednesday night I awoke with the feeling that Jesus wanted me. I resisted, for, to be honest, I did not want the trouble of walking down to the chapel in the early hours of the morning. Still the 'call,' the impulse, was too strong. I went and knelt before the Tabernacle, thinking He had some message for you. At first He did not seem to heed my question, 'Lord, what do You want?' And then I felt as if He were reminding me of that little prayer inviting Jesus to live in my heart as He lives in the Tabernacle. He seemed to make this compact with me: 'that if I took up a certain kind of recollection which would mean a vast amount of watchful self-denial, He would dwell with me from Communion to Communion, but that I would easily drive Him away by unfaithfulness.' It was nothing more than an impression, though a strong and powerful one; and it has made me yearn intensely for such a close union. I know if I were humble I would drive such a thought from me; but as Jesus has spoiled me by His love and generosity in the past, I am daring or presump-

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[20] *Lights in Prayer,* Quarterly Series, 1914, p. 21. This divine immanence must, of course, not be interpreted in a pantheistic sense. As Rodriguez points out (*Christian and Religious Perfection* i. 6, 4—Eng. trans. i. 345) this presence of God is effected by acts of the will, and not, for instance, by *imagining* Christ to be walking beside us. "I used to represent God to myself as outside," says Segneri (*Lights in Prayer,* Quarterly Series 1914, p. 265), "but in this I perceive that I have erred and that I should look at Him as within me where He really is."

[21] See above, pp. 206 ff.

tuous enough to hope that He may give me such a grace in the future."

It is quite clear from this extract that the "certain kind of recollection," which Fr. Doyle adopted and which was apparently represented by the number 10,000 entered in his notebook next day, involved indeed "a vast amount of watchful self-denial," but was primarily valued by him as God's appointed method for his corresponding with the promised grace of "close union."

In his advice to others, especially to favoured souls, he emphasised this ideal of union. "Our Lord," he writes, "wants your whole day to be one continued act of love and union with Him *in your heart*, which has no need of words to express it." But this, he warns his correspondent, "means a constant effort to bring back our wandering imagination." In another letter he advocates "the method of union described by S. Teresa." "From time to time," he says, "stop and make an act of adoration of Him who is really within your soul, until by degrees the thought of His presence will never leave you." In this same letter, after urging "the practice of aspirations steadily growing in number," he curiously adds this advice: "Use as few vocal prayers as possible but rather try to 'bask' in His love."

The esteem in which Fr. Doyle held mental prayer and contemplation is shown by the part he took in the foundation of the Colletine Convent in Cork. The father of a spiritual child of his offered to build the convent, if Fr. Doyle could secure episcopal permission. With the approval of the Bishop of a neighbouring diocese Fr. Doyle decided on a house; but at the last moment permission for the foundation was withdrawn. Finally he secured leave from the late Dr. O'Callaghan, Bishop of Cork. Building began in the spring of 1914 and on the following Christmas Eve Fr. Doyle's protegée, who had in the interim been professed in Belgium, together with some nuns from Carlow, quietly took possession. Many difficulties, internal and external, had still to be faced, through all of which Fr. Doyle continued to be friend and adviser. In November, 1916, in answer to a despairing letter

from the convent, he wrote: "Last night I remained on my knees in the trenches from 10 p.m. till 2 a.m. praying for Mary's house." A month before his death, on the feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, he sent a note from Saint Omer to say he had celebrated Mass that morning for his "little flock." "Have no fear," he wrote, "Mary is at the helm and will bring the little barque safely to port."

This incident in Fr. Doyle's apostolic life has been reserved for mention here, because its chief interest in this biography is the light it throws on his attitude towards a life of prayer and immolation. It would not be surprising to find in an active missioner of the type of Fr. Doyle a "healthy" dislike of purely contemplative orders and a tendency to value religious life in proportion to its direct social or educational work. What is rather unexpected is that, on the contrary, he braved the criticism and opposition of those many good people who unconsciously have become worshippers of modern activism.[22] In particular, when a difference of opinion arose in the convent as to the relative proportion of vocal and mental prayer, Fr. Doyle strongly opposed what he considered an undue encroachment on meditation and contemplation. He was, in fact, to use a vague but expressive phrase, on the side of the mystics.

Was he himself one? "If the name of mystic," writes Père de Grandmaison,[23] "is reserved for a human life in which the soul is normally and habitually more acted upon than acting; in which the purification of the powers of the soul is effected, and especially is completed, by a divine operation which the person undergoes rather than accomplishes under the inspiration of grace; in which there is substituted in large measure for our ordinary knowledge of divine things

[22] Cf. pp. 224 ff, 239 ff. The humiliations and misunderstandings he had to endure cannot be recounted here for obvious reasons. Alluding to one he writes in a private letter: "Had I written out a list of a hundred possible humiliations, I think I could have accepted ninety-nine of them without much difficulty. But if Jesus Himself had asked the last one, I believe I would have refused it. Yet that last one was the very humiliation He sent the other morning, and I am squirming still! It was frightful, but He got a big loving kiss for it all the same."

[23] *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 145.

one of a higher order, which is general and full of relish, unformulated and affective, at times giving the impression of being immediate; then it is not established that Fr. Doyle was a mystic. It rather seems that he was not; the active, militant and multiple element clearly predominating in his life over the passive, contemplative, unitive element. But if, as we apparently ought, we broaden the notion of a mystical life; if we estimate it by the amplitude and diversity of the divine appeals; if we apply it to every human existence in which the privileged action of Christ and of the Holy Spirit is visible, legible, manifest, makes itself felt strongly, habitually and often without human intermediary . . . ; then we must unhesitatingly say that the life of Fr. Doyle was that of a great mystic, as it indeed seems to have been that of a saint."

A brief consideration of this judgment will enable us not only to take a final review of the place of aspirations in Fr. Doyle's life, but also to make some prefatory remarks before considering further aspects of his inner life.

In a very real sense the whole supernatural life is mystic; it is a participation in the life of God, a deification, an incorporation in Christ. "It is no longer I who live," says S. Paul,[24] "it is Christ who lives in me." "Everyone baptized," says Père Lebreton,[25] "can and should repeat this triumphant affirmation; it is not merely the enthusiastic cry of a saint; it is the act of faith of every Christian." But we must distinguish between the ordinary state, in which grace works through the natural faculties functioning normally, and those higher states in which the supernatural is experimentally known and lived. Mysticism, or, to use the older and better name, contemplation, is essentially the direct experience of God's presence in the soul.[26] In this experience God reveals

[24] *Gal.* ii. 20. On the Vulgate version and its punctuation see Lagrange, *Epître aux Galates,* Paris 1918, p. 52.

[25] *Le Dieu vivant,* Paris 1919, p. 142.

[26] Cf. Dom. C. Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 1922, p. 278. "We apply the word mystic to those supernatural works or states which our own industry is powerless to produce, even in a low degree, even momentarily."—A. Poulain, S.J., *The Graces of Interior Prayer,* 1910, p. 1. This definition defines mysticism not by its essential content but by a theological criterion of its causality.

His presence by mysterious touches and a more or less distinct intuition. "This mystic contemplation or union," says Fr. Baker,[27] is of two sorts: (1) Active and ordinary, being indeed an habitual state of perfect souls by which they are enabled, whensoever fit occasion shall be, to unite themselves actively and actually to God by efficacious, fervent, amorous, and constant, yet withal silent and quiet, elevations of the spirit. (2) Passive and extraordinary, the which is not a state but an actual grace and favour from God, by which He is pleased at certain times, according to His free good pleasure, to communicate a glimpse of His majesty to the spirits of His servants after a secret and wonderful manner. And it is called passive, not but that therein the soul doth actively contemplate God, but she can neither, when she pleases, dispose herself thereto, nor yet refuse it when that God thinks good to operate after such a manner in the soul, and to represent Himself unto her by a divine particular image, not at all framed by the soul but supernaturally infused into her; which grace is seldom, if ever, afforded but to souls that have attained to the former state of perfect active union."

Now, according to mystical writers, the internal prayer proper to the state of active contemplation is aspirations, which, beginning as ordinary vocal prayers, become more spontaneous and spiritual and culminate in continuous operations of the will. "A soul may come to that state," says Fr. Baker,[28] "that she may constantly breathe forth aspirations and yet, sufficiently to the discharge of her obligation, either work, read, hearken to a lesson recited, say or hear Mass, communicate, etc." In this way a soul may "become wholly aspirative" [29]—an expression which aptly describes the case of Fr. Doyle.

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[27] *Holy Wisdom* iii. 4, 1; ed. Sweeney, 1876, p. 505. See also Père Grou, S.J., *Spiritual Maxims*, No. 2, Eng. trans. 1910[5], pp. 16 f.

[28] *Ibid.* iii. 4, 2, p. 514. Cf. n. 18, 515: "This growth of immateriality in aspirations is not easily perceptible, though it be real and certain, as we know that corn grows though we cannot perceive its growing." On the place of aspirations in the mystic life, see also Joannes a Jesu Maria, O.C.D., *Theologia mystica*, c. 9, p. 84, ed. Lehmkuhl, Freiburg, 1912; and the *Cloud of Unknowing*, cited above p. 215.

[29] *Ibid.* n. 12, p 513.

It is clear, then, that a life of continual aspirations, especially when these are highly spiritualised and spontaneous, is mystic in the broad sense of the word and contemplative within the traditional meaning of the term.[30] Moreover, the existence of this active contemplation in a life is no proof whatever that passive contemplation does not also coexist in that life; the presumption is rather that it does. Even the greatest mystics must act like ordinary human beings for most of their daily life; and it is an exceedingly hazardous procedure to try to estimate the "predominance" of active mental or affective prayer relatively to periods of passive union, merely on the evidence presented in a biography which is based on chance materials. If "the active, militant and multiple element" predominates in this biography of Fr. Doyle, it may be simply because the active incidents in a mixed life are easier to describe than the contemplative, particularly in the absence of any autobiographical description of his state of prayer. The multiplicity, more apparent than real, in Fr. Doyle's efforts to supernaturalise his apostolic life does not tell us anything concerning his life of prayer when he was free from social and apostolic duties.

One has but to read the autobiography and diary of S. Ignatius to realise that he was a great mystic in the strict sense of the word.[31] Yet, as we have seen, he was a most efficient administrator and an indefatigable worker; he was addicted to multiple active devotions such as aspirations and the particular examen, by which he strove to become "contemplative in action."[32] We know also from the surviving

[30] This state corresponds to affective prayer, prayer of simplicity or so-called "acquired contemplation." R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P. (*Perfection Chrétienne et contemplation,* Saint-Maximin 1923, pp. 272 ff) maintains that "contemplation" means exclusively passive infused contemplation. But see the older view in Butler, *Western Mysticism,* 1922, p. 283.

[31] See reference to the diary on p. 133, note 1. The autobiography, dictated to Fr. L. Gonzalez, is published in *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904); there is an English translation by E. M. Rix, *Testament of Ignatius Loyola,* London 1900; and a French translation by E. Thibaut, S.J., *Le récit du Pèlerin,* Louvain 1922. Cf. L. Peeters, S.J., *Vers l'union divine par les Exercises de S. Ignace,* 1924, pp. 14–25.

[32] "Simul in actione contemplativus."—Nadal, *Epistolae* 4 (1905) 651. Cf. his detailed interest in the cooking (*Scripta de S. Ignatio* i. 498) and the cleanliness of the house (pp. 486, 503, 516, 559), his care in writing letters

fragment of S. Francis Borgia's diary that he was curiously methodic and numerical in his devotions. He divided up the twenty-four hours, he had special prayers for every hour, he made a resolution to make a hundred genuflexions each day.[33] Yet we learn from the testimony of S. Teresa that even in the midst of work his will remained united to God.[34] These are but two Jesuit examples to show that mystics, when not mystical, usually display methodic common-sense and efficiency. It were futile to guess which quality or virtue—contemplativeness of effectiveness—predominates.

(2.) JESUIT PRAYER

The Spiritual Exercises are a manual of interior reform, especially intended for those who aspire to perfection. They are not a treatise on prayer; they do not even contain a general method of meditation.[35] S. Ignatius merely applied to

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(p. 513), his minute directions to the Fathers going to Ireland (*Epistolae* i. 1903, p. 174) and to Trent (pp. 386 f.) See also above p. 129. W. James says: "S. Ignatius was a mystic, but his mysticism made him assuredly one of the most powerfully practical human engines that ever lived."—*Varieties of Religious Experience,* 1902, p. 413.

[33] P. Suau, S.J., *Histoire de S. François de Borgia,* Paris, 1910, pp. 554 ff., p. 575. Père Brou says that the originality of Borgia's diary consists in "the care which this contemplative has to exploit his day methodically for the purpose of prayer."—*La spiritualité de S. Ignace,* Paris 1914, p. 156.

[34] "In this [prayer of union] it happens sometimes, often even, that the soul clearly understands (at least so it appears to her) that her will is united to God and that this faculty is solely occupied with Him without being able to turn to any other object, while the two other faculties (the intellect and the memory) remain free for business and for the service of God. In a word, Martha and Mary proceed together. Extremely surprised at experiencing this, I asked Fr. Francis Borgia if it were not an illusion. He said no, it often happened to himself."—Letter to R. Alvarez, S.J., (Feb. 1576): *Lettres de S. Térèse,* French trans. (Bouix) 1 (1861) 380. Cf. S. Jane F. de Chantal in her deposition for the canonisation of S. Francis de Sales: "His life was a continual prayer, for I can certify that he walked almost always recollected in God. I asked him if he was a long time without turning actually to God. He replied, 'Sometimes about a quarter of an hour.' "—*Oeuvres* 3 (1876) 170.

[35] R. de Maumigny, S.J. counts five methods given by Ignatius: meditation according to the three powers of the soul, simple affective contemplation, application of the five senses, reflection on words, slow vocal prayer.—*Methodes d'oraison des Exercices de S. Ignace,* Paris 1917. We may even enumerate more if we include the methods for examination of conscience and the contemplation for obtaining divine love.

definite spiritual subjects the ordinary processes of reflective thought. Some of his followers, writing chiefly for beginners in the art of prayer, have considered it necessary to construct a rather elaborate system, which is interpreted as a sort of complicated mental etiquette that has to be observed before one is permitted to converse with God. Whereas a method of prayer is, like grammar or logic, a spontaneous natural procedure, which is usually best observed when there is no explicit advertance paid to it. And in any case, as the Directory (8, 3) points out, "this business of prayer, even though it requires our coöperation, depends much more on God and is His gift; hence the soul should rather dispose itself thereto by humility and purity than rely on its own preparation and industry."

S. Ignatius did not publish the Exercises as a book of meditations for all and sundry; they were meant primarily for the giver of a retreat; and they cannot be properly understood apart from the living voice of the master and the spiritual experience of the exercitant. In his preliminary annotations he instructs the director to "allow the Creator to work directly with the creature and the creature with her Creator and Lord;" and again he insists that "the Exercises should be adapted; . . . thus to each, according as he seeks to dispose himself, there should be given that whereby he may better help himself and make profit." The early commentators also emphasised the flexibility of the Exercises and the need of adapting them to the individual soul.[36]

Still it remains true that there is in the Exercises a certain characteristic, the basing of emotions and will upon knowledge, which has always been insisted upon in Jesuit spirituality and pedagogy. This is regarded as the normal method in the Society, especially for the younger members. The Master of Novices is directed to put the novices carefully through the Exercises so that "among other things they may have a certain method of mental and vocal prayer, adapted to our In-

36 *Annotations* 15 and 18. Gagliardi, *Comm. seu Explan. in Exercitia*, Bruges 1882, p. 2; De la Palma, *Via spiritualis, Barcelona* 1887, ii. 35. On St. Ignatius's liberty of spirit see above p. 141, 143 f.

stitute, which they ought to observe subsequently." [37] The Spiritual Father is exhorted to "take care that they retain the methods of prayer and meditation which our Father Ignatius taught in the book of the Exercises and that they become very familiar with that book." [38]

This advice was not, of course, pressed with mechanical rigidity, though variations were watched somewhat jealously. The Directory of the Exercises, composed by order of Fr. Claudius Acquaviva, after explaining the methods proposed by S. Ignatius, adds: [39]

"It must not be thought that thereby are excluded other methods which the Holy Spirit teaches and which men, exercised in the spiritual life, adopt according to experience, reason and sound doctrine, or which each one discovers by practice to be useful for his spiritual progress. This also applies to Ours, always with the approval or consent of the superior or spiritual director, to whom each one should manifest his method of prayer, all the more so if in any way it departs from the ordinary."

Similarly Fr. Acquaviva says in his encyclical letter already quoted:—

"There is no need to prescribe a definite subject or special method for those who have often exercised themselves in meditation and by long practice have acquired facility in prayer. The Spirit of the Lord is not guided by leading strings. To enlighten souls and to attach them closely to Himself He has innumerable ways; hence no brake or fixed limits. . . . We must not run counter to the constant experience of the holy fathers and despise contemplation or forbid it to Ours." [40]

Suarez is even more explicit. These methods, he says,[41] "are not prescribed with the intention of binding a man or of preventing the Holy Spirit from moving His creature as

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[37] *Regulae Magistri Novitiorum*, 28.
[38] *Regulae Praefecti Rerum Spiritualium*, 4.
[39] *Directorium* 37. 13: *Exercitia Spiritualia*, Madrid 1919, p. 1074. Similarly the *Directorium Antiquum*, ibid. p. 877.
[40] *Epistolae Praepositorum Generalium* Roulers, 1909 [2], pp. 250 f.
[41] *De religione S.J.*, ix. 6, 3.

He wishes; they merely instruct a man how to work and meditate and reason when he is not specially moved by the Holy Spirit, and to be ready to receive the impulse of the Holy Spirit and to feel and follow Him."

This action of the Holy Spirit is manifested not only in purely supernatural mystic prayer but also in the affections of the will to which reasoning and reflexion are subsidiary. Does not S. Ignatius himself tell us in the second annotation that "it is not abundance of knowledge that fills and satisfies the soul but the interior feeling and tasting of things"? And in a letter to a Poor Clare he writes: "All meditation in which the understanding works fatigues the body; other meditations there are, regulated and quiet, which are not trying to the understanding or wearisome to the interior spirit, and which are made without exterior or interior effort." [42] It is clear, indeed, that the discursive prayer or meditation described in the Exercises is intended for exercitants who are undertaking the determination of their state of life or the reform of their life, rather than for the guidance of souls already striving for perfection. In the case of the latter, the work of the intellect and reason will naturally be more reduced and their prayer will tend to become more affective.[43] This will be more especially true of those who are unable to make prolonged reflections and meditations; such souls often worry themselves at their supposed inability to pray. "Many people," says S. Francis de Sales,[44] "make great mistakes about how they should pray. They think that a great deal of method is required and are eager in striving to find out this particular art which they fancy it is so necessary to know." "I do not say," he adds, "that we ought not to make use of the methods recommended to us, but we must not cling to them as do those who think they

[42] *Epistolae* 1 (1903) 108; O'Leary, *Letters and Instructions of S. Ignatius*, 1 (1914) 29.

[43] C. de Smedt, S.J., *Notre vie surnaturelle*, 1920 [3], ii. 67. It is noticeable that in the Exercises themselves the Repetitions, coming after the understanding has done its preliminary work, are much more affective and prayerful than the meditations.—L. Peeters, S.J., *Vers l'union divine par les Exercices*, Bruges 1924, p. 80.

[44] *Spiritual Conferences*, No. 18, Eng. trans. 1906, p. 359.

have never prayed well, unless they make their considerations before the affections which our Lord gives them; whereas those affections are really the end for which we make the considerations."

"If your faculties do not help you much towards intellectual operations," advises Nadal,[45] "you should follow that prayer which starts from the affection of the will. This is the way of love, so extolled by devout men." "It is sometimes the case," writes Père Grou,[46] "that a person truly devoted to God finds his efforts to meditate all in vain, . . . he will do well, with his director's consent, to try simply to remain quiet in the presence of God, entreating the Holy Spirit to teach him to pray." Or to quote Fr. Doyle's advice: "Make your prayer simple, as simple as you can; reason little, love much, and you will pray well."

This affective prayer is essentially identical with the aspirations already described, which are affections of the will without methodic reasoning; and if these stirrings or turnings of the soul become more continuous and spontaneous, they merge into what Bossuet has called the prayer of "simple look." "If this look at God lasts but a moment," says Père Caussade,[47] "it is no more than a good transient act. But if by fidelity to ordinary grace or by special favour, we acquire the ability

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[45] *Epistolae* 4 (1905) 711.

[46] *Spiritual Maxims,* No. 14, Eng. trans. 1910 [5], p. 140. Similarly De la Puente (*Vida del V. P. E. Alvarez* 41. 2, Madrid 1920, p. 349): "The common mode of prayer must be ordinarily proposed to all. But if our Lord by exceptional favour places anyone from the beginning in the prayer of quiet, he should be encouraged in this way. . . . The same advice can be given to those who through weakness or other cause cannot make long reflections." "For this kind of [discursive] prayer Dame Gertrude found herself wholly unfitted—probably because her strong propensity towards God gave her a kind of disgust for reasoning and consideration as unnecessary and wearisome. . . . Speaking generally, women, whether they have this propensity or not, are less able to meditate than men—partly because women's wills are more powerful by nature than their understanding, and partly through want of education and training by which the ability to meditate is acquired."—Baker, *Inner Life of Dame G. More,* ch. 9, 1911, p. 60. Compare S. Teresa, *Life* iv. 10.

[47] *Instructions spirituelles* (1741); Eng. trans. by L. V. Sheehan (*Progress in Prayer*), St Louis, 1923 [2], p. 37. Bossuet's *Manière courte et facile pour faire L'oraison en foi et de simple présence de Dieu* will be found in the volume *Doctrine spirituelle de Bossuet,* Paris 1908 [4], pp. 104 ff.

to sustain this interior look for a comparatively long time, then so long as our loving look lasts we are making what Bossuet calls a prayer of simple regard. If little by little this becomes continuous, in the sense explained by Bossuet, then we shall have attained to the observance of God's command to Abraham: 'Walk before Me and be perfect.' (*Gen.* 17. 1.)"

In the Jesuit system, then, simple affective prayer, made without strain of reason or imagination and broken into fragments by aspirations interspersed with work, is held to be an excellent form of prayer; but at the same time the morning meditation is regarded as normally a discursive prayer based on previously prepared "points." Due latitude is allowed in individual cases; but any general attempt to depreciate systematic meditation in favour of affective prayer has always been discouraged. "I understand," writes S. Francis Borgia to the Provincial of Aragon,[48] "that you enjoin your subjects always to make acts of love in their prayers and that you wish to lead them all by this way. I praise your zeal and good desires; it is indeed the best and highest of spiritual exercises. But I warn you that all are not suited for this nor can they understand it or reach it. . . . The motions of the Holy Spirit are diverse, and so also are the talents and intelligences of men." Several further attempts were made in the Spanish provinces of the Society to propagate this affective prayer, and the General, Fr. Everard Mercurian, had to intervene in 1574 to moderate the propaganda.[49] There was no question of condemning such prayer, but only of preventing it from swamping methodic meditation in a wave of semi-mystic piety which might easily result in vague sentimentalism. It was felt that in general the educated and cultured men who lived in the Society should not shrink from hard thinking, and that their wills and resolutions would be

[48] Suau, *Histoire de S. François de Borgia*, 1910, p. 392.

[49] Astráin, *Hist. de la Comp. de Jesus en Espana* 3 (1909) 181 ff. On the celebrated case of B. Alvarez, see *ibid.* pp. 189–196. His Apology is printed in his Life by de la Puente; a synopsis is given in Baker, *Holy Wisdom* iii. 1. 7; ed. Sweeney, 1876, pp. 384 ff. Previous efforts to change the Society's prayer are described in Astráin 2 (1905) 412–418.

the clearer and stronger when based on reflection and meditation.

All through its history the Society has had to struggle against perversions of mysticism. S. Ignatius himself had to face the Inquisition, for illuminism was rife in Spain in his lifetime and afterwards. We have seen his fear of delusions in prayer.[50] And in the Constitutions (p. 1, c 3, n 12) he enumerated among the impediments debarring from admission to the Society, "indiscreet devotions which are wont to cause one to fall into illusions and serious errors." Later on the Society took a leading part in combating the dangers of quietism, as in our own days it has refused to be stampeded by the widespread cult of amateur mysticism. It has been truly said that "as a whole the Society prefers ascetics to mystics." [51] It has even been said that this preference has resulted in an anti-mystic reaction, of which the famous "Practice of Christian and Religious Perfection," published in 1609 by Alphonsus Rodriguez, is a proof. Doubtless Rodriguez, obeying Mercurian's letter,[52] does not give much space to affective prayer; but neither does he exaggerate the function of meditation," "We must not entertain ourselves in meditation," he says,[53] "any longer than is necessary to move our will." As to higher prayer, he declares that "we must leave it entirely to God to call and elevate us to it whenever He Himself pleases." "We cannot teach it nor even explain what it is, nor is it in our power to attain it; neither does God command it, nor will He call us to account about it." [54] Which is merely what even Fr. Baker says: "Such passive unions are rather a reward and free grace bestowed by God on souls

[50] See above p. 206. He especially distrusted exterior mystic phenomena —*Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 342. S. Teresa had a horror of "melancholic beatas"—Letters, Eng. trans. by Benedictines of Stanbrook, 2 (1921) 297 Cf. ibid. p. 108: "For the love of God get well, eat enough and do not be alone or think much; occupy yourself with what you can and how you can."

[51] H. Brémond, *Hist. litt. du sentiment religieux en France* 5 (1923) 11. Cf. Brou, *Les Exercices Spirituels*, 1922, p. 221.

[52] He cites this i. 5, 6; Eng. trans. i. 248.

[53] i. 5, 11; vol. 1, p. 263.

[54] Rodriguez i. 5, 5 and 7; Eng. trans. vol. 1, pp. 246, 249.

that have been extraordinarily faithful and diligent in mortification and internal exercises than an end to be intended by any; for even the most pure and perfect souls cannot with all their industries procure them at pleasure."[55] Rodriguez deliberately refrained from aspiring to be a guide in these higher regions; but he has shown how a soul may do its part to merit, but at least *de congruo,* the gift of mystic prayer.

This is what S. Ignatius himself did in the Exercises. As Suarez says, he stopped at the initial stages of the contemplative and unitive life, for "the remainder pertains to the teaching rather of the Holy Ghost than of man; hence he said little concerning union with God and the act of simple contemplation."[56] He certainly gave no systematic treatment of mysticism, and Suarez was probably right in assigning as the main reason the reluctance of the Founder to appear to supersede experience—a reticence which sometimes might not be misplaced even nowadays; besides, to have done so would have opened the door to delusions and to attacks on the score of illuminism. But all through the Exercises the direct action of the Holy Spirit—particularly in the rules for the discernment of spirits and for elections—is presupposed; and the early commentators find many allusions to mysticism.[57] The reserve of such a mystic as Ignatius is not without its significance; but it must not be misinterpreted to mean that he is an exclusive partisan of ordinary ways and an adversary of higher contemplation. He considered it enough to encourage generosity, for he held that "generally speaking the more anyone closely united himself to God and the more generous he showed himself towards the Divine Majesty, the more generous he will also experience God to be towards him and the fitter will he be every day to receive graces and

[55] *Holy Wisdom* iii, 4, 4 (n. 7); p. 533.

[56] *De religione S.J.,* ix. 6, 9. Even in the lifetime of Ignatius it was said by members of the Society that the Exercises were suited only to sinful seculars—*Exercitia Spiritualia,* Madrid 1919, p. 684. Suarez repudiates this (n. 34).

[57] Gagliardi († 1607) *Comm. seu Explan. in Ex. Spir.,* Bruges 1882, p. 24; Le Gaudier († 1622), *De la perfection de la vie spirituelle,* Brussels 1908, i. 507. Cf. Peeters, *Vers l'union divine,* 1924, pp. 122 ff.

richer spiritual gifts."[58] What these gifts are we learn from an interesting letter which he wrote to Francis Borgia and in which he spoke more freely to a chosen soul. As it throws valuable light on the attitude of Ignatius towards mysticism, it is worth while to translate portion here.[59]

"Instead of seeking or shedding any blood, it is much better to seek more immediately the Lord of all and His most holy gifts such as the shedding of tears, whether (1) for the sins of oneself or others, or (2) at the Mysteries of Christ our Lord in this life or in the other, or (3) in consideration and love of the divine Persons. And these tears are of more value and merit as they occur in higher thoughts and considerations. And, though the third consideration is more perfect than the second and the second more than the first, yet for each individual that one is much the best in which God our Lord the more communicates Himself, showing His most holy gifts and spiritual graces. For God sees and knows what is most suitable for him, and as He is all-wise He Himself points out the way to him. And, in order to find the path with the help of His divine grace, it helps us much to seek and to grope in many ways, so as to walk in that path which is clearest, happiest and most blessed in this life, which will guide us to that other endless life wherein we shall be embraced and united with such most holy gifts.

"I understand by these gifts those which it does not lie in our own power to possess when we wish, but which are given to us solely by Him who dispenses every good; for example, increase of faith, hope and charity, spiritual joy and repose, tears, intense consolation, elevation of mind, divine impressions and illuminations, finally the spiritual tastes and feelings

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[58] *Summarium Constitutionum*, n. 19; *Const. S.J.*, iii. 1, 22, p. 96 ed. de la Torre.

[59] *Epistolae* 2 (1904) 235 f. The date is 20th Sept., 1548. The susceptibility of such a strong man of action to tears—as shown in his Diary—is significant. Yet he writes eleswhere (*Epist.* v. 713): "As far as the gift of tears is concerned, one cannot unconditionally pray for it; for it is neither necessary nor always in itself good and helpful. . . . Were it in my power to give the gift of tears to certain people, I would not give it to them; for it would not further them in charity, but would only injure their health and head and would thus only hinder all works of charity."

which lead to such gifts; all with the humility and reverence due to our holy mother the Church and to its rulers and teachers. Each one of these most holy gifts ought to be preferred to all bodily acts, which indeed are good only in so far as they help in the acquirement of these gifts. I do not mean to say that we should seek them for the contentment and delight found in them; but knowing that without them our thoughts, words and works are all alloyed and cold, we desire them in order that our works may be warmed, clarified, rectified, in the interest of the greater service of God. . . . As to the mode of proceeding in details, it has not seemed to me in our Lord that I should speak; hoping that the same divine Spirit which hitherto has governed your Highness will continue to guide and govern for the greater glory of His divine Majesty."

We see here not only the reverent respect for the working of the Holy Spirit, so typical of the humble largemindedness of Ignatius, but also his emphasis on the practical nature of Jesuit prayer "in the interest of the greater service of God." "The special prayer of the Society," says Nadal,[60] "is that which is extended to the exercise of vocal prayer and every exercise of the Society's ministry; and in which, as much as can be attained with the grace of Jesus Christ; the enlightenment of the understanding, the good affection of the will and the union continues during, accompanies and guides all our works, so that God our Lord is found in everything." "Union with God," says Gagliardi,[61] "was not narrowed by our Father Ignatius nor essentially placed in mental elevation to God in

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[60] *Epistolae* 4 (1905) 673. He says just previously: "Prayer can help us much if the will and affection are more exercised therein than the understanding." The opposition which Brémond (*op. cit.* v. 42) professes to find between Lallemant and Rodriguez is exaggerated. Rodriguez is expressing the traditional Jesuit view; action is not so much the object of prayer as its effect. Indeed this is the traditional Catholic view. "Maius est contemplata aliis tradere quam solum contemplari."—S. Thomas, *Summa* 2.2, q 188, a 6. Even the great mystic Teresa says: "I wish for no prayer that does not make me grow in virtue. If it were accompanied by violent temptations, aridities and trouble, and left me more humble, I should consider it a good prayer; for the more it pleases God, the better the prayer in my opinion.—*Letters*, Eng. trans. 2 (1921) 96.

[61] *Comment. seu Explan. in Exerc. Spir.*, Bruges 1882, pp. 100, 104.

the quiet and solitude of the contemplative life, but extended widely to all the works of daily virtues. Just as in these works and ministries the purgative life is exercised by mortification, and the illuminative by the practice of virtues, so does he require that we should also be perfectly united to God and transformed into Him by love. . . . For to work with this intention and efficacy is to be united to God in practice; and by the total communication of one's own will which is involved in this divine love, there is effected a true and sublime transformation of man into God, an ecstasy not of intellect but of the will and of the whole man." "Not everyone that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of My Father, who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." (*Matth.* 7. 21.)

(3.) FATHER DOYLE'S PRAYER

While we possess many details concerning Fr. Doyle's aspirations and mortifications, our information concerning his method and state of prayer is, in the absence of any autobiography or self-revelation, comparatively meagre. But the messages and inspirations recorded in his spiritual diary help to show us that, whether working or praying, his chief characteristic was continual susceptibility to grace. He may well be described, like S. Ignatius, as "a contemplative in action," for he so construed his life that it was a constant contemplation for obtaining divine love and everything and everybody spoke to him of God.

Like S. Ignatius tossing the reins on his mule's neck as he rode towards Montserrat, Fr. Doyle loved to see an intimation of God's will in what men usually call chance. He would "cut" a favourite book—say, the Life of Gemma Galgani, the Life of Père Ginhac, or even the New Testament itself—in order to find some helpful text; an act to which, by the way, we owe S. Augustine's conversion. Indeed, wherever he was and whatever he saw, he was always ready to see God's hand and to hear His voice. Thus he records in his diary

on 21st Dec., 1913: "At the end of the performance of *Quo Vadis?* the words of our Lord seemed to go through my soul, 'I am going to Rome to be crucified for thee.' Jesus must have given me a big grace, for I walked home stunned, with these words ringing in my ears, 'crucified for thee.' Oh! Jesus, Jesus, why cannot I be crucified for You? I long for it with all my heart, and yet I remain a coward. Thank you at least for the dear light You have given me about the life You ask from me, namely, 'to give up every comfort and gratification, to embrace lovingly every possible pain and suffering.'" A devout conclusion not always deducible from cinema shows!

Fr. Doyle's habit of interrogating everything for a spiritual message is shown in his visits to shrines. In Feb., 1911, when giving a retreat in Cork, he visited the grave of the little orphan child who is known as 'Little Nellie of Holy God.' "Kneeling there," he says, "I asked her what God wanted from me, when I heard an interior voice clearly repeating, 'Love Him, love Him.' The following day she seemed to rebuke me, when leaving the cemetery, for the careless way I performed most of my spiritual duties, and to say that God was displeased with this and wanted great fervour and perfection in them." In November, 1912, he was able to pay a visit to Lourdes. "Almost the first thing" he writes, "which caught my eye at the grotto was our Lady's words: *Pénitence, pénitence, pénitence!* On leaving, I asked Jesus had He any message to give me. The same flashed suddenly into my mind and made a deep impression on me." A week later he was in Lisieux. "Kneeling at the grave of the Little Flower," he says, "I gave myself into her hands to guide and to make me a saint. I promised her to make it the rule of my whole life, every day without exception, to seek in all things my greater mortification, to give all and to refuse nothing. I have made this resolution with great confidence because I realise how utterly it is beyond my strength; but I feel the Little Flower will get me grace to keep it perfectly." While he was military chaplain in France, he was able to pay two visits to Amettes in the diocese of Boulogne, the birthplace of St. Benedict

Joseph Labre. This is how he records his second visit on 1st May, 1917:

"Second pilgrimage to Amettes from Locre. During the journey I felt our Lord wanted to give me some message through St. Benedict Joseph Labre. No light came while praying in the Church or in the house; but when I went up to his little room and knelt down, a voice seemed to whisper 'Read what is written on the wall.' I saw these words: *Dieu m'appelle à la vie austère; il faut que je me prépare pour suivre les voies de Dieu.*[62] With these words came a sudden light to see how much one gains by every act of sacrifice, that what we give is not lost; but the enjoyment (increased a thousand fold) is only postponed. This filled me with extraordinary consolation which lasted all day."

It will thus be seen that holiness was Fr. Doyle's constant preoccupation. Though he was human and social as well as many-sided in his interests, the central realities of his life were God and his own soul. God was to him no distant Creator or far-off Judge, He was an ever-present Companion whose voice he could not mistake, to whom he always turned. Angels were to him no subtle speculation, nor were the saints merely historical examples. With childlike simplicity he spoke to them and strove to learn from them. One looks in vain among his papers for a doubt or a hint of modern scepticism. He saw things from within, and he was satisfied; he did not just read about religion, he lived it. And so he abode in our cities of to-day, those great wildernesses of stone and steel, just as if he had been dwelling in the uplands of Galilee twenty centuries ago. He passed through life with the faith of a little child, and thus out into the great Beyond, still a child, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Aided by this childlike faith and intuition, Fr. Doyle had an extraordinarily vivid realisation of the spiritual world. In his life there is no trace of any doubts against faith. God was intensely real to him and prayer seemed to be an actual colloquy. Holiness appeared "natural" to him, not in the

[62] "God calls me to an austere life; I must prepare myself to follow the ways of God."

sense that he found or made it easy, but inasmuch as it alone satisfied his yearnings and ideals. Thus he writes during his 1909 Retreat in preparation for his Final Vows:

"I feel within me a constant desire or craving for holiness, a longing for prayer and a great attraction for mortification. Even walking along the streets I feel God tugging at my heart and, in a sweet loving way, urging, urging, urging me to give myself up absolutely to Him and His service. Over and over again I say, 'My God, I *will* become a saint since You ask it.' But there is no progress, no real effort. The truth is, I am afraid of the sacrifice, afraid of doing what God wants; and I delude myself into thinking I am doing God's will and satisfying Him by an empty promise. What an abuse of grace! This cannot go on. I feel there must be a change now in this retreat, an absolute surrender to all God wants."

It was especially during his retreats that he found God's voice clear and insistent in his soul. "I am beginning my own retreat to-morrow," he wrote in 1914. "I long for this time all the year until it comes, and then dread it. I am afraid of Jesus! It is a tremendous thing to be alone with Him for eight whole days, listening to His voice, drinking in His love—and then to think I may not go and do His bidding!" Just after this retreat he wrote to an intimate correspondent: "My own retreat was a happy time. It is the one little oasis in my wandering life, when I can really be alone with Jesus. The chief feature of it was a feeling as if He were giving me great strength to face His work and an increase of courage and confidence. In former retreats I used to suffer from a strange fear of our dear Lord, a fear that He might really make me see what He wanted; in my cowardice I dreaded that. In this last retreat this dread was absent in great measure, and help has come from the thought that everything will be His doing, not mine."

Even outside retreat time he often records periods of great grace. "Sunday and Monday last," he writes on 20th June, 1912, "were days of wonderful grace for me, as if the Hunter of souls had run His quarry down and so surrounded it with

the toils of His love that all escape was impossible. Alas! does He not well know how that foolish hare will break lose and escape again so soon, spoiling all the plans of the patient Hunter. Still Jesus cannot pass close to the soul without leaving some lasting impression. I cannot but feel that the light He has given me must leave its mark behind, and that I cannot be quite the same again without an awful abuse of grace."

In another letter he tells his correspondent of a temptation to be dissatisfied with his necessarily active life. "It is a help to me at times," he says, "to speak out my heart to you, for I know you understand what I say. I have been suffering much for some time past in a strange way, and I feel the crucifixion must press heavier still. You know what a distracting busy life mine is at present. I mention it for I know it is His wish and I am doing His work. But no words could tell you how I shrink from all this intercourse with people and how hateful this necessary (?) gossip and chat is to me. More and more a positive passion to be alone and silent is taking possession of me. I am never so happy as when speaking to Jesus, while the attraction to His feet in the Tabernacle at times is agony to resist. My soul hungers for prayer; not that I find much sweetness in it, but I do find immense strength and great light."

We see from this that his attraction for prayer was not based on consolation but on conviction. He very often felt disgust and weariness. Sometimes, when he felt ill or weak and inclined to shorten his morning meditation, he used to lash himself to his *prie-dieu*. And out of the depths of such experience he advised others. "One word about the difficulty at prayer," he once wrote. "It is an unnatural thing, that is a supernatural thing, and hence must always be hard; for prayer takes us out of our natural element. But pray on all the same."

But, in spite of occasional dryness and more frequent fatigue, Fr. Doyle experienced at his prayer, more particularly before the Blessed Sacrament, certain locutions, messages or

inspirations, which were often so vivid that he wrote them down verbatim. There is no doubt whatever that he regarded these as genuine mystical locutions within his soul. This is shown by his care in recording them and his promptness to act on them; he also told one or two intimate friends of his belief in them. And it is also clear from many of his expressions that he critically reflected on the evidence, and that the inspirations often came suddenly and were sometimes unwelcome to his natural inclinations. As these locutions are, if genuine, conclusive proof of Fr. Doyle's mysticism, and in any case portray for us his interior life and ideals, they merit to be reproduced in some detail in this and in the following chapter.

Under the date of 18th January, 1912, we read in his diary:

"I felt Jesus asking me to make a long visit and wishing to speak to me. His message was:

(1) To note down the big sacrifices of each day as this helps me to generosity.

(2) To make a spiritual Communion with each person receiving.

(3) Greater abandonment still of all comfort—'absolute nakedness.'

(4) To make a half-hour's visit during the day when I am able (11.45 to 12.15.)"

"Jesus told me at Exposition," he records on 11th October, 1914, "and (he adds significantly) I do not think I have mistaken His Voice, that the way in which I must sanctify myself is by suffering, corporal penance, and denial in all things."

More in detail he records a similar message on 16th June, 1912: "I felt the presence of Jesus very near to me while praying in the chapel at Ramsgrange. He seemed to want me to write down what He said: 'I want you, my child, to abandon every gratification, generously, absolutely, for the love of Me. Each time you give in to yourself you suffer an enormous loss. Do not deceive yourself by thinking that certain relaxations are necessary or will help your work. My

grace is sufficient for *you*. Give Me *all* at all times; never come down from the cross to which I have nailed you. Be generous, go on blindly, accepting all, denying yourself all. Trust in Me, I will sustain you, but only if you are really generous. Begin this moment and mortify every look, action, desire. No gratification, no relaxation, no yielding to self. Surrender yourself to Me as My victim and let Me make you a saint.' " Certainly not the kind of message one's imagination would take pleasure in conjuring up!

The following entry in his diary, made on 1st April, 1914, gives us a further idea of the heroic urgings which he experienced in prayer:

"I begin to-day my twenty-fourth year in the Society, with a heart full to overflowing with gratitude for my vocation. I write this before my Jesus in the Tabernacle and I have asked Him to make me note down what He wants from me.

"Jesus says: (1) I want you to trust Me more: vou are too much afraid of injuring your health by doing what I ask of you: *e.g.* rising at night, sleeping on boards, taking no butter, etc. I would not urge these things so much if I did not want them from you. Trust Me more, My child. Have I not helped you to do many things you thought impossible and have you suffered for it? (2) I want you also to be My 'Suffering Love,' never content unless you are making some sacrifice. You have not given Me *all* yet, though you know I want it, and until you do so, I cannot give you the marvellous graces I have destined for your soul. Be brave, be generous, but do not delay. There is joy in crucifixion. (3) I want this year to be one of profound recollection and intense union with Me. I have promised to dwell *physically* in you as in a tabernacle, from Communion to Communion, if you do what I have asked you—guard your eyes. (4) Your faults of the tongue must cease from this day, they are working you much harm. (5) You must work for Me as you have never done before, especially by prayer and aspirations, boldly urging souls to heroic sanctity, not minding what people may say of you. Human respect is one of your faults still.'

"Before leaving the chapel, Jesus said: 'In future let your

heart speak; you are afraid of letting people know that you love Me tenderly.' "

In another entry,[63] under the date 10th July, 1912, he had already referred to this promise of a special indwelling of Christ:

"I awoke in the middle of the night with the feeling that Jesus wanted me. I resisted, but at last got out of bed. At the foot of the altar I was thinking of something else, when suddenly He seemed to remind me of my prayer, 'Jesus come and dwell within my heart as in a tabernacle.' I felt Him urging me to this close union and He seemed to promise me that He would remain with me 'from Communion to Communion' if only I was recollected, but that I would easily drive Him away by unfaithfulness especially in want of guard over my eyes."

This mysterious grace is also recorded in the lives of other holy souls. For example Sister Mary of the Divine Heart tells us she was distressed because Christ did not remain as Man after the consumption of the eucharistic species. "He listened to my complaints and requests," she says,[64] "promising to remain in my heart and stay with me there, not only in His Divinity but also in His Humanity. How I know not; but what I do know is that from this time I was almost always sensible of His divine presence. I saw nothing but I knew that He was within me and near me." This favour, however, even if it be literally interpreted, must be regarded as gratuitous and accidental and not comparable with the essential object of the Holy Eucharist. "We must never forget that the presence of the divine Saviour in us, the transitory union of His Body with ours, however admirable be this proof of His love, is only the sign of the permanent union of His

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[63] In this entry, written solely for his own eye and God's, he makes no apology for his belief in the message. But in describing this same incident in a letter (already cited on page 212) he adds a significant defence of his belief.

[64] L. Chasle, *Soeur Marie du Divin Coeur, née Droste zu Vischering,* Paris 1906 [2], p. 44; Eng. trans. (*Sister Mary of the Divine Heart*) 1911 [3], p. 42. So also Soeur Gertrude-Marie—Leguéu, *Une mystique de nos jours,* 1910, pp. 193, 196.

Divinity with our soul; that it is this which constitutes the fruit of the Sacrament and the object of its institution." [65]

Even apart from supernatural messages, Fr. Doyle had, like S. Ignatius, a deep reverential belief in the ordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit. "A devotion," he once wrote, "a devotion which does not consist in any special form of prayer nor in doing anything in particular more than to listen to inspirations, is devotion to the Holy Spirit of God. And does it not commend itself very specially to religious? For, as the work of Creation belongs preëminently to the Father and that of Redemption to the Son, so the work of our Sanctification and Perfection is the work of the Holy Ghost. We honour Him when we listen to His inspirations. He is ever whispering what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. When we are deliberately deaf to His voice, which is no other than the small voice of conscience, we grieve instead of honouring the Holy Spirit of God. So let us often say: Come, O Holy Ghost, into *my* heart and make me holy so that I may be generous with God and become a saint. See what the Holy Spirit made of the Apostles—changed them from skulking cowards into great saints afire with the love of God."

"Every grace we get," he wrote on another occasion, "enlightens the understanding and strengthens the will. When the understanding is enlightened, we have the awful alternative of coöperating with or rejecting the inspirations of grace. This we are either doing or not doing all the day long. God will not compel us, He will not interfere with our freedom, it must be our own choice. S. Paul was struck down when he received the inspiration. But he did not lie there as so many of us do. He got up and asked God what He wanted him to do. His will was strengthened because he accepted the grace that was offered. Let us do the same. From neglect of Thy holy inspirations, O Lord, deliver us."

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[65] Ch. de Smedt, S.J., *Notre vie surnaturelle*, Brussels 1920 [3], i. 91 f. Some few theologians (such as Vazquez *Disp.* 204, *n.* 7: *Comment.*, Lugd. 1620, iii. 281) maintain as probable "a special union between our flesh and Christ's" as also one of the permanent effects of Holy Communion.

"The gifts of the Holy Spirit," says S. Thomas,[66] "are certain habits by which a man is perfected so as to obey the Holy Spirit promptly." Fr. Doyle showed such docility very conspicuously. He often waited for some interior inspiration before acting, and when it came, he obeyed instantly.[67] "The resolution I feel impelled to make to-day," he wrote on the eve of his Last Vows (1909) "is to consult the Holy Ghost about everything, and to do what He suggests, to listen to His inspirations and to refuse Him nothing. I believe this would sanctify me quickly."

And again he writes on 12th Sept. 1913:

"I have felt strongly urged again to give myself entirely to the guidance of the Holy Spirit and to follow His inspirations. For example, I sometimes feel urged to take the discipline during the day, and when I have been able to overcome the repugnance to the trouble of it, my soul has been filled with joy. Many other thoughts of this kind come into my mind—to rise when I wake, not to do this or that—I am certain they are from the Holy Spirit, but I resist His voice, and hence feel unhappy. In future I will say a little prayer for light and then do what I am impelled to. Just now I was sitting in an armchair fearfully tired. It cost me a big effort to undress and take the discipline, and put on chain round waist. But the result was a most marvellous increase of bodily vigour."

It need scarcely be said that such a method, in the case of one untrained in theology or less mature in spirituality would be fraught with great danger. It was to St. Joseph, not to our Lady, that the angelic messages were given; and the converted Paul was sent for direction to Ananias. God wishes to help us through the medium of those whom He has appointed for the guidance of souls. So also in Fr. Doyle's own case this promptness to carry out the inspirations of grace by no means implied that he dispensed himself

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[66] *Summa Theol.* 1. 2, q 68, a 3.

[67] Compare what was said of Père Ginhac: "Generally the final decision is postponed until the last moment. He waits for a sign from divine providence or the least impulse of the Holy Spirit."—*A Man after God's Own Heart*, p. 88.

from the general guidance of superior, director or confessor, or, in special cases, from detailed permission.[68] This submission to external rule and guidance is the universal characteristic of Catholic holiness. "I was once thinking," says St. Teresa,[69] "of the great penance practised by Doña Catalina de Cordona, and how I might have done more, considering the desires which our Lord had always given me, if it had not been for my obedience to my confessors. I asked myself whether it would not be well for the future to disobey them in this matter. 'No, my daughter,' said our Lord to me. 'You are on the safe and certain road. Do you observe all her penance? I think more of your obedience.'" Similarly S. Margaret Mary[70] records that our Lord said to her: "I will adjust My graces to the spirit of thy rule, to the will of thy superioress and to thy weakness; so that thou must regard as suspicious everything that might withdraw thee from the exact observance of thy rule, to which I will that thou shouldst give the preference."

It is but natural, of course, that a fully formed Jesuit is not in need of the same minute detailed direction which is necessary for weaker untrained souls. S. Ignatius supposes that the finished member of his Society is expert in the discernment of spirits, quick to detect evil influences and self-deception, alert to recognise the promptings of grace.[71] And, in addition, Fr. Doyle had ample evidence for thinking that he was favoured with special guidance from God. Like M. Olier,[72] he could say: "I am guided interiorly like a child tended by a father of consummate wisdom and perfect goodness. This takes place in the depth of my soul by a Divine operation inexpressibly delicate and which the devil cannot counterfeit. Sometimes it is a movement, sometimes a voiceless word making itself heard more distinctly than any utterance." The best proof of the authenticity of these inspirations is the peace which their fulfilment always brought

[68] See pp. 144, 172.
[69] *Relations* iii. 12. Compare also *Foundations* 28, 18. See also p. 327.
[70] *Life* (Paray-le-Monial), Eng. trans. 1912, p. 37.
[71] See above pp. 253 ff.
[72] E. H. Thompson, *Life of Jean Jacques Olier*, 1886 [2], pp. 130 f.

him. "One of the best marks of good inspirations in general, and particularly of extraordinary ones," says S. Francis de Sales,[73] "is the peace and tranquillity of heart that receives them; for, though indeed the Holy Ghost is violent, yet His violence is gentle, sweet and peaceful." One so steeped in the spirit of the Exercises, one so watchful in continual self-conquest, as Fr. Doyle, was well fitted to guide himself and others in the imitation of Christ. He was also able through his own experience to guide souls in the higher regions of prayer. "By virtue of their Institute," declares Suarez,[74] "the members of this Order ought to be contemplatives, and not anyhow but in such a degree that they can form contemplatives. . . . Though theological science is necessary and can be of great help in this spiritual and mystical direction, yet it is not of itself sufficient without one's own practice and experience." Fr. Doyle had the direction of many gifted souls and he accepted this task only with a serious sense of responsibility. He was by no means uncritical and he was always severely practical. He had no love for that theorising about mysticism which is so common. "I would strongly advise you," he once wrote, "not to read books treating of the mystical life unless you can get a good guide. You might be imagining yourself in a certain state when you are a thousand miles away from it. . . . Go on quietly, loving God and seeking to please Him, without trying to find out in what exact state of perfection your soul is." Very sound advice for any beginner who is inclined to confuse the acquisition of a mystical vocabulary and an abnormal habit of self-dissection with the actual experiences and privileges of the saints. "Credence must not always be given to young sisters just entering religion," writes S. Francis de Sales,[75] "when they say they are in this or that lofty state; for very often it is only a delusion and amusement of the

[73] *Treatise on the Love of God*, viii. 12; Eng. trans. (Mackey) 1884, p. 358. Père de Grandmaison says of Fr. Doyle: "There exist in his spiritual notes a great number of interior words, the efficacy of which shows sufficiently that they were authentic."—*Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 143.

[74] *De religione S.J.*, i. 6, 5.

[75] *Letters to Persons in Religion*, Eng. trans. (Mackey) 1901 [8], p. 382.

fancy." And S. John of the Cross makes a remark which is not yet antiquated. "I am terrified," he says,[76] "by what passes among us in these days. Anyone who has barely begun to meditate, if he becomes conscious of these locutions during his self-recollection, pronounces them forthwith to be the work of God, and, considering them to be so, says, God has spoken to me, or, I have had an answer from God. But it is not true; such a one has been only speaking to himself."

Fr. Doyle, of course, was not always merely negative and repressive. To several holy souls he gave help and guidance in regions ordinarily inaccessible. In one or two cases, perhaps three altogether, he ultimately gave his approval to the genuineness of mystical phenomena such as locutions.[77] Many times he records in his diary a message which one of these few spiritual children sent to him as coming from Christ. This is an instance: "Tell him I desire this union with My whole Heart; I want to teach him how to deal with My disciples." But as these messages are by no means as clear and practical as his own lights, and as we have no means of examining their authenticity, nothing would be gained by reproducing them here. Besides, it is not at all clear that occasionally Fr. Doyle's trustful sincerity was not influenced to the detriment of a more severely critical judgment which a riper experience would have created.

(4.) EUCHARISTIC DEVOTION

"My belief in the Mass as an easy means of sanctification," wrote Fr. Doyle in a letter, "is growing ever stronger. I realise more and more that, for religious especially and for a priest naturally, the Mass is the key of the inner sanctuary

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[76] *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, ii. 29, 4; Eng. trans. 1906, p. 223.

[77] It is to be understood that mystic contemplation is essentially quite independent of (*a*) corporeal reactions such as ecstasy, ligature of the powers, levitation, etc., and (*b*) gratuitous gifts (*gratiae gratis datae*) such as visions and revelations, whose immediate object is not the sanctification of the recipient. Catholic spirituality is always severely sceptical of these concomitants.

of God's love. "The Holy Sacrifice was very much in my mind during the retreat," he writes in 1914. "One thought especially occurred again and again, namely, what an inexhaustible reservoir of grace and endless sanctity is contained in the worthy celebration of or assistance at Mass. It seemed as if I were getting only drops instead of the torrents of grace and love which every Mass could bring to the soul." His own daily Mass was celebrated with a fervour which was apparent even to strangers. Phrases, such as Kyrie Eleison, Sursum Corda, Dominus Vobiscum, which by their very iteration tend to become mechanical utterances, seemed on his lips to be always full of freshness and meaning.[78]

This fervour at Mass was but one expression of his love for the Blessed Sacrament.[79] Again and again he gives vent to his Eucharistic devotion. "The mad longing for His presence," he writes, "is at times overpowering. It would be hard to describe how He chains me to Him, the magnetic attraction, the more than physical force that drags me to the Tabernacle, and then the pain with which I realize at His feet how small and feeble the human heart is to give Him a love worthy of His." He spent every spare moment in church or chapel; and since spare moments grew scarcer as the years went on, he laid the hours of sleep under contribution. On some feast days, such as that of Corpus Christi, he contrived to spend, at intervals, as much as seven hours before the Blessed Sacrament. But besides his want of leisure in the daytime, he had a special love for vigil before the Tabernacle. Prayer was easier in the quiet stillness of the night, he was free to express outwardly the longings of his heart, and last but not least, he liked nocturnal prayer be-

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[78] It was a similar zeal which led him to publish his little *Synopsis of the Rubrics and Ceremonies of Holy Mass,* Washbourne, 1914. One of the booklets he had projected was "An Explanation of the Priest's Actions at Mass." "How many of us," he asks, "could tell why, for example, the priest blesses the water and not the wine at the Offertory?"

[79] He became a Knight of the Blessed Sacrament on 1st January, 1917, at Locre in Belgium, where he was military chaplain. "I have often wondered if it is imagination," he writes in a letter (12th July, 1913), "but it seems to me that when giving Communion to children, especially to the very little ones, our Lord seems to leave my hand with a joy which I can feel."

cause it was hard. To rise when one awakes, or to set one's alarum for midnight, and creep down to the chapel, even were it only for a few minutes, is no slight act of mortification. Still more heroic is the cheating oneself of the sleep earned after a hard day's work. Fr. Doyle did not ever find this easy. In his Retreat of September, 1915, he records: "A greater urging to spend every available moment with Him and to try to practise nocturnal adoration oftener; 'every night' Jesus says, but I am too cowardly and too fearful of my health. Would He not help me if I tried?" [80]

He expressed his attraction for such prayer in a letter written at Tullow on 12th May, 1913:

"I find the temptation growing stronger every day to leave aside all work that is not absolutely necessary and to spend the time with Jesus. Why does He make me realize so much His loneliness in the Tabernacle and His longing for 'one to console Him,' and at the same time fill my hands with so many things to do? My room here is opposite the little oratory, only a thin partition separates the two rooms; and it is hard to sleep when in fancy I can almost hear the beating of His Heart of love. He is always 'calling' and He seems so happy and consoled when I steal in to Him when everyone else is asleep and He is left alone. These moments before Him are rich in grace, especially recently, and I find it hard to think of anything but Jesus and His love. I long to open wide my heart and to let Him hide Himself there, deep, deep down, to bend over Him with tenderest love and give Him every mark of affection, to have Him transform me into Himself, so that I can exclaim, 'I live now, not I, but Christ liveth in me!' " (*Gal.* 2. 20.)

It was while he was on the mission that he most keenly

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[80] Obviously, such nocturnal prayer requires discretion and guidance. "It is incredible," says S. Francis de Sales, "how dangerous long night vigils are and how much they weaken the brain. It is not felt during youth; but it comes to be felt so much the more afterwards, and many persons have rendered themselves useless in this way."—*Letters to Persons in Religion,* Eng. trans. (Mackey), 1901 [3], p. 68 (cf. p. 43). See also the 10th Addition to the First Week of the Exercises.

felt his inability to visit our Lord at night, it was then that he realised how much a domestic chapel means. "I never knew," runs a letter of his, "how much Jesus in the Tabernacle enters our lives as religious, till I had to live for weeks in houses where he was absent. I managed to make the Holy Hour each week, though I have to wait till all are asleep before I can steal out to the chapel, sometimes a couple of miles away."

Later on when stationed in England as military chaplain he wrote: "There is one thing I cannot (I almost wrote 'will not') bear, the loss of our dearest Lord. It is bitterly hard to have to live day after day without His presence except for a few moments each morning during Mass, which only makes things harder still, for I am left hungering for Him for twenty-four hours. I have found a tiny chapel some miles from here, but I can seldom get there. The thought of Jesus in that lonely Tabernacle haunts me always, and at night I seem to hear Him calling gently and sadly. Oh! how I wish I could go to Him through the mud and rain." A month later (January 1916) he writes: "We came here (Bordon Camp) in awful rain and wind, but on reaching the barracks, the first thing I saw were the words: 'R. C. Hut.' Thinking it was just the empty hut for Sunday Mass, and yet half-hoping, I opened the door to find a beautifully furnished little chapel with the red lamp that told me all. I think I now know what Mary felt when she found her Son in the temple. How I thanked Him for this gift, for His goodness in sending my regiment to camp about His dwelling! His goodness did not stop there, for without asking him, the priest in charge gave me the key, so that I can come to Jesus at any time. I am very happy now, for I have Him, *Deus meus et omnia*[81]—all else cannot supply His place—and life seems quite changed."

Even when serving at the Front, his thoughts turned to nocturnal prayer and adoration. Here is an entry dated 25th

[81] "My God and All"—aspiration of S. Francis of Assisi. (*Fioretti* 2.)

October, 1916: "Jesus has long urged me to give Him a whole night of prayer and reparation. Last night I prayed in my dug-out at Kemmel from 9 till 5 (eight hours), most of the time on my knees. I bound myself beforehand to do so by vow in order not to let myself off. Though I had only two hours' sleep, I am not very tired or weary to-day. Jesus wants more of these nights of prayer, adoration and atonement."

Thus this true follower of the Prince of Peace pursued his calm inner life amid the scenes and sounds of human strife, kneeling in his dug-out and adoring his eucharistic Lord in the pyx as quietly and devotedly as if he were in the domestic chapel of Rathfarnham Castle. Two months before his death he notes (21st June, 1917): "Jesus told me to-day that the work of regeneration and santification is to be done by leading souls to Him in the Blessed Sacrament." And on 2nd July he records: "The conviction has been growing that nocturnal adoration will be established only if I spend much time myself before the Blessed Sacrament at night. I know well that Jesus not only wants me to sacrifice much of my sleep, but also to rise sometimes during the night to adore and console Him in the Tabernacle. The repugnance (and yet attraction) to this is extraordinary."

It will be clear from such an admission that Fr. Doyle's devotion to the Real Presence was quite compatible with dryness, drowsiness and discomfort. In advice once sent to another he gives us the secret of his own devotion to his sacramental Lord. "Real devotion to the Blessed Sacrament," he writes, "is only to be gained by hard, grinding work of dry adoration before the Hidden God. But such a treasure cannot be purchased at too great a cost, for once obtained, it makes of this life as near an approach to heaven as we can ever hope for." "Every moment before the Blessed Sacrament is precious," he says in another letter, "especially when one is dry and wanting in sensible devotion, as prayer is then a real test of love."

(5.) PERSONAL ATTACHMENT TO CHRIST

Even rationalist ethics feels the need of a personal model and an ideal spectator. "Some good man," says Epicurus,[82] "should be loved by us and held ever before our eyes, so that we may live as if he were a spectator and do everything as if he were witness." Modern rationalists can even accept Christ as this "good man." "Religion," says John Stuart Mill,[83] "cannot be said to have made a bad choice in pitching on this Man as the ideal representative and guide of humanity; nor even now would it be easy even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life." "Does approve," a believer would say. The very tense—*would* approve—shows the futility of this hypothetical appeal as an effective motive of action. The imitation of Christ will remain a mere academic ideal until we make our Lord a living reality and the object of our personal devotion.

"Is it possible," asks a Protestant clergyman, no less a personage than the late Master of Balliol,[84] "is it possible to feel a personal attachment to Christ such as is prescribed by Thomas à Kempis?" "I think," he replies, "that it is impossible and contrary to human nature that we should be able to concentrate our thoughts on a person scarcely known to us, who lived eighteen hundred years ago." What a complacently uttered verdict from one who, with all his scholarship, never comprehended the inner meaning and motive-power of priest and nun, aye, and of millions of suffer-

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[82] Fragment 210, p. 163 Usener (Seneca, *Ep.* 11.8). Cf. fr. 211, p. 163 (Seneca, *Ep.* 25.5): "So do everything as if Epicurus were spectator."

[83] *Three Essays on Religion,* 1875[4], p. 255.

[84] Abbott and Campbell, *Life and Letters of B. Jowett,* ii. 151. Contrast S. Peter (i. 1. 8): "Jesus Christ whom having not seen, you love; in whom also now, though you see Him not, you believe; and believing shall rejoice with joy unspeakable and glorified." H. S. Holland declared as an undergraduate after listening to a sermon of Jowett: "It was just Platonism flavoured with a little Christian charity. Christianity is gutted by him."—S. Paget, *Henry Scott Holland,* 1921, p. 33.

ing toilers who in Christ alone find rest for their souls! It is precisely this intense personal attachment to Jesus that is the key to the life of a man like Fr. Doyle. It was the driving-force of that chivalrous Spanish hidalgo who, after winning earthly glory at the siege of Pampolona, hung up his sword at the shrine of our Lady of Montserrat and enlisted in the service of the King whose proclamation rang in his ears: "My will is to conquer the whole world and all enemies and thus to enter into My Father's glory. Therefore whoever desires to come with Me must labour with Me, in order that following Me in pain, he may likewise follow Me in glory." [85] *Mecum* (with Me)—does not this little word carry in it the heart of Christianity? The sacrifices of religious life are possible because it is life with Christ. The heroism of Christian charity lives on because it is done for Christ, with Christ, to Christ. What a measureless volume of human service has been created by the presence and the ideal of Christ! What a burden of human suffering has been borne with Christ, laid beside the Passion of the Son of Man, ever since the days when Peter and the apostles went "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." (*Acts* 5. 41.) To-day, after twenty centuries, the name of Jesus is still as potent, and the friendship of Christ is alone able to inspire what is most sublime and heroic in humanity. Unless we grasp the ever-living reality of this companionship of Christ, we shall fail completely to understand the struggles, the ecstasies, the so-called follies of the saints and of those hidden souls innumerable of whom the world is not worthy. "The consciousness of this friendship of Jesus Christ," writes Mgr. Benson,[86] "is the very secret of the saints. Ordinary men can live ordinary lives, with little or no open defiance of God, from a hundred second-rate motives. We keep the commandments that we may enter into life; we avoid sin that we may escape hell; we fight against worldliness that we may keep the respect of the world. But no man can advance three paces on the road of perfection

[85] *Spiritual Exercises,* (The Kingdom of Christ).
[86] *The Friendship of Christ,* 1912, p. 10.

unless Jesus Christ walks beside him. It is this, then, that gives distinction to the way of the saint, and that gives him his apparent grotesqueness too—for what is more grotesque in the eyes of the unimaginative world than the ecstasy of the lover? Commonsense never yet drove a man mad; it is commonsense that is thought to characterise sanity; and commonsense therefore has never scaled mountains, much less has it cast them into the sea. But it is the maddening joy of the conscious companionship of Jesus Christ that has produced the lovers, and therefore the giants, of history. It is the developing friendship of Jesus Christ and the Passion that has inspired those lives, which the world in its dull moods calls unnatural and the Church in all her moods supernatural."

"A man will not roll in the snow," says Mr. G. K. Chesterton,[87] "for a stream of tendency by which all things fulfil the law of their being. He will not go without food in the name of something, not ourselves, that makes for righteousness. He will do things like this, or pretty nearly like this, under quite a different impulse. He will do these things when he is in love. The first fact to realise about S. Francis is involved in the first fact with which his story starts; that when he said from the first that he was a troubadour and said later that he was a troubadour of a newer and nobler romance, he was not using a mere metaphor, but understood himself much better than the scholars understood him. He was, to the last agonies of asceticism, a troubadour. He was a lover. . . . For the modern reader the clue to the asceticism and all the rest can best be found in the stories of lovers when they seemed to be rather like lunatics. Tell it as the tale of one of the troubadours and the wild things he would do for his lady, and the whole of the modern puzzle disappears."

As with Francis of Assisi so with a very different type of saint, Aloysius Gonzaga. "When we have said that this boy led a life in every point surpassing human averages," writes

[87] *S. Francis of Assisi*, ch. 1, pp. 14 f. "This monk can give lessons to lovers," said Arthur Symonds after translating the Spiritual Canticle of S. John of the Cross.

Fr. Martindale,[88] "is there any easier explanation of all this than that he was in love with God? This granted, we shall have explained no less his eccentricities, his exaggerations, his coldnesses, his angers, his isolations, his obstinacies, all that else were unaccountable. The genius, the lover, and the saint are each indeed wholly unaccountable to the uninspired, if he be not aware of the lack in himself of that spirit which governs them. Utterly impossible is it to succeed in rationalising a saint. Not tame nor vulgar nor pretentious nor conventional are saints. Even the human great are recognised by us as having their own canons of behaviour."

It will be well to remember these remarks when we come to consider some of Fr. Doyle's apparent eccentricities and exaggerations. Meanwhile let us see what a lover of Jesus he was. It scarcely needs to be proved that his whole life was pivoted on love for Christ. Without some such cardinal passion or absorbing motive, a man will not devote his life to sacrificing his natural inclinations, seeking and enduring pain, toiling in gratuitous and often unrequited service, laying down his life amid nauseating scenes of carnage.[89] Such a life can only be led with Christ, always mentally and often sacramentally present. "When I am tempted to break a resolution or do not want to make some sacrifice," he resolves, "I will say five times, Will you refuse to do this for the love of Jesus?" And one of his notebooks is headed: "Little sacrifices which cost some thing, offered to gain a great love for Jesus." This was the overmastering motive of all his asceticism.

At times Fr. Doyle felt overpowered by the intensity of his love for Jesus. "Even as a child," he writes, "I longed and prayed to be a saint. But somehow it always seemed

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[88] *In God's Army: Christ's Cadets*, 1917 [2], pp. 52 f.

[89] Here is a note jotted down on 22nd April, 1905: "Work for Jesus! Yes, though the weary head may ache and the tired brain refuse to act. Work on, work on; the years slip by and soon the hour of toil will cease for ever. Work for Jesus! How sweet these words! Not one effort escapes His watchful eye and He will reward you with a joy unknown for what you suffer now."

to me as if that longing could never be realised, for I felt there was some kind of a barrier like a high wall between myself and God. What it was, I cannot say even now. But recently this obstacle appears to me to have been removed, the way is open, and I feel I love Jesus now as I never did before, or even hoped to. With this comes the conviction, so strong and consoling with so much peace and happiness, that Jesus will grant my heart's desire before I die. I dare not put on paper what I feel, even if I could; but at times Jesus seems to pour all the grace of His Sacred Heart upon me until I am almost intoxicated with His love and could cry out with the pain of that sweet wounding."

"I cannot deny," he said on another occasion, "that I love Jesus, love Him passionately, love Him with every fibre of my heart. He knows it, too, since He has asked me to do many things for Him, which have cost me more than I should like to say, yet which with His grace were sweet and easy in a sense. He knows that my longing, at least, even if the strength and courage are wanting, is to do and suffer much more for Him, and that were He to-morrow to ask for the sacrifice of every living friend, I would not refuse Him. Yet with all that, with the intense longing to make Him known and loved, I have never yet been able to speak of Him to others as I want to."

And here is a precious letter in which, forgetting his usual reserve, he gives an intimate correspondent a glimpse into the inner fires of his soul. It is dated from the Presentation Convent, Bandon, 30th July, 1914.

"What you say is indeed true. Jesus has been 'hunting' me during these past days, trying to wound my heart with His arrows of love. He has been so gentle, so patient, tender, loving, I do not know at times where to turn, and yet I somehow feel that much of this grace is given me for others, I know it has helped souls and lifted them close to Jesus.

"I long to get back to my little room at night, to calm and quiet, and yet I dread it, for He is often so loving there. I feel He is near because I cannot go to Him in the Taber-

nacle. It is such a helpless feeling to be tossed about as it were on the waves of love, to feel the ardent, burning love of His Heart, to know He asks for love, and then to realise one human heart is so tiny.

"Your letter and little meditation have helped me. At times I have smiled at the folly of what you say since I realize how little you know of my real character, and then like a big wave the truth seems to burst on me, that, as a fierce fire sweeps away and consumes all obstacles, so the love of God blots out the many faults and failings of my poor life and leaves me free to go to Him.

"The bands are playing in the town below, but the music in my soul is a thousand times sweeter. 'The Love of God.' I have one more lecture, some confessions and then—no you may not come—He wants to be alone with me for a few brief moments at least that I may pour out on Him all my love and affection and put my arms around His neck—my Jesus and my All. Forgive me, child, I am foolish."

The crucifix always inspired him with a vivid realisation of Christ's love and Passion. "To-day," he writes from Dundalk on Ascension Thursday, 1914, "to-day we had a public procession for the blessing of the new mission cross. I was told to carry the figure and when the church was reached to stand on the raised basement facing the people. Suddenly my position dawned upon me. I was standing with the Crucified in my arms and my back to the towering cross, 'a spectacle to angels and to men.' For the first time I realised a little of our Lord's feelings as He hung on the cross, looking down on a sea of faces. A strange sense of shame and confusion crept over me, followed by great consolation and a feeling of growing strength and desire for suffering, as I realised somehow that my position was more than one of mere chance. I know Jesus has given me a great grace of some kind. What does it mean? 'And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all hearts to me'—this has just flashed into my mind. Ask our Beloved to teach me how that 'lifting up' is to be accomplished."

Another intimate note tells us how at times his love found vent in reverently yet affectionately embracing the image of

his crucified Master.[90] "I went on to —— and once more had an opportunity of a quiet prayer before the life-size crucifix in the church which I love so much. I could not remain at His feet but climbed up until both arms were around His neck. The Figure seemed almost to live, and I think I loved Him then, for it was borne in upon me how abandoned and suffering and broken-hearted He was. It seemed to console Him when I kissed His eyes and pallid cheeks and swollen lips, and as I clung to Him, I knew He had won the victory, and I gave Him all He asked."

"Human respect," he wrote to a friend in July, 1914, "is the cause of most of my hesitation; at one time that silly fear of what others might think or say of me if I tried to be perfect nearly ruined my life. For years I refused to do what Jesus asked, lest others might notice my longing to be a saint, and so, I suppose, I have hidden from you the secret fire of love which, you have guessed, was burning in my heart. I have suffered much, especially in the past, from dryness and desolation, and have a fair share now at times, joined to terrible temptations to turn my back on Jesus and work heart and and soul for the devil by doing all the harm I can. Still, in spite of all my unfaithfulness, He has given me the grace of a deep, personal, sensible love for Himself which has broken down every barrier of fear and, perhaps what others might call reverence. The happy moments I have spent close up to the tabernacle, with my head resting against it or my heart pressed to His! I love often to clasp my arms round His statue and lean my head on His shoulder as S. John must have done, and give Him those marks of affection He seems so eager to receive. Oh, if only we could sink into that ocean of love stored up in His adorable Heart, eternity would not be too long to thank Him for the joy that life of love would bring us."

Fr. Doyle's love for Christ was thus not confined to the

[90] This little quotation from a letter of Fr. Doyle's will help to explain his attitude still further: "The wretched spirit of Jansenism has driven our dear Lord from His rightful place in our hearts. He longs for love, and familiar love, so give him both—I need scarcely say, when others do not see you."

cold upper regions of the soul, whither many who walk in the darkness of faith must relegate it. It was something which filled his whole being and at times overflowed sensibly. "Was not our heart burning within us whilst He spoke in the way?" exclaimed the two disciples. (*S. Luke* 24. 32.) Fr. Doyle was often on the Emmaus road; Jesus seemed to speak in the way, and his heart was burning within him. His emotion then found utterance in loving transports, one of which was happily put on paper. "I know not why I am writing this," he says, "except it be to ease my straining heart, for at times I feel half mad with the love of God."

"Jesus is the most loving of lovable friends—there never was a friend like Him before, there never can be one to equal Him, because there is only one Jesus in the whole wide world and the vast expanse of Heaven; and that sweet and loving friend, that true lover of the holiest and purest love is *my Jesus,* mine alone and all mine. Every fibre of His divine nature is thrilling with love for me, every beat of His gentle Heart is a throb of intense affection for me, His sacred arms are round me, He draws me to His breast, He bends down with infinite tenderness over me, His child, for He knows I am all His, and He is all mine. In His eyes the vast world, the myriads of other souls have all vanished, He has forgotten them all,—for that brief moment they do not exist—for even the infinite love of God Himself is not enough to pour out on the soul who is clinging so lovingly to Him.

"O Jesus, Jesus, Jesus! who would not love You, who would not give their heart's blood for You, if only once they realized the depth and the breadth and the realness of Your burning love? Why not then make every human heart a burning furnace of love for You, so that sin would become an impossibility, sacrifice a pleasure and a joy, virtue the longing of every soul, so that we should live for love, dream of love, breathe Your love, and at last die of a broken heart of love, pierced through and through with the shaft of love, the sweetest gift of God to man."

Doubtless there are stolid souls who will not appreciate these emotional outpourings, who regard such fervent language as

mere sentimentalism. It is true, of course, that such utterances were never meant to be dragged from their sacred privacy into the cold light of print. But that is just the beauty of them. They well up spontaneously from the heart of a strong man, they express the pent up enthusiasm of this brave soldier of Christ, seeking an unconventional outlet. Fr. Doyle was no sickly sentimentalist or hysterical weakling. He lived what he felt, and he meant what he said. Why should we fancy that strength must be shorn of tenderness? Why should we think that only earthly love is privileged to have its delights? Paul, the man of action, was accused by some Corinthian converts of being "beside himself." "If we have been beside ourselves," he answers, "it was for God; if we are now in our right senses, it is for you. For the love of Christ overmasters us—reflecting that as One died for all, then all were dead; and that He died for all, so that the living may no longer live to themselves but to Him who died for them and rose again. . . . Hence if any one is in Christ, he is a new being, his old life has passed away, a new life has begun!" (*II Cor.* 5. 13–17.) *Charitas Christi urget nos.* Thus wrote the great Apostle of the Gentiles in a public letter. And John, "the disciple whom Jesus loved, the one who at the Supper leant back on His breast" (*S. John* 21. 20), tells us that "we know what love is through Christ's having laid down His life for us" (*I John* 3. 16.)

S. Ignatius was surely a man of force and action, without a trace of gush or sentimentalism. Yet read the fragment of his diary; almost every day he records "abundance of devotion and tears." M. Olier was undoubtedly a prudent ecclesiastical reformer and a practical missioner. Yet here is one precious glimpse into his interior. "On Whit Sunday," he says,[91] "wishing in the evening to rest after the work of the feast and to go to bed, I felt myself moved to pray. On the instant I ex-

[91] Fallon, *Vie de M. Olier,* Paris 1873[4] i. 172; Thompson, *Life of J. J. Olier,* 1886[2], p. 64. He regarded sentiment as "a great enemy of solid piety."—*Lettres de M. Olier,* No. 53, Paris 1885, i. 189. Fr. Doyle was also an enemy of sentimentality. "We must be *intellectually* pious," he writes, "that is, our piety should rest on the bedrock of principle, and not on mood, on sentiment, on spiritual consolation."

perienced so violent an attack of love, that, being unable to bear it, I was obliged to throw myself on the ground. There I could only keep uttering the words: Love, love, love, I am dying, I cannot bear this flame." Such men did great things, because they loved much. "The love of God is never idle," S. Gregory tells us.[92] "If it is there, it works great things; but if it refuses to work, it is not love."

This love takes liberties and talks strange things. "With my mouth I touch Thee and ardently do I press Thee to myself," sings S. Bernard.[93] "Let me be wounded with those Wounds and drunken with His blood," hymns Jacopone da Todi.[94] And in the prayer so loved by Ignatius occurs the petition: Blood of Christ inebriate me.[95] It is the poetry of love. And often it chose the symbols of action as well as of language. S. Philip Neri "always kept about him a figure of our crucified Lord in bronze separate from the cross, that he might the more easily vent the affections of his heart upon it." [96] And S. Catherine de' Ricci detached the figure of our Lord from the cross of her cell crucifix, "the better to contemplate and lovingly adore it." [97] Jesus Himself condescended to this loving intimacy. We read in the *Fioretti* (ch. 49) of the vision of Christ to Brother John of Alvernia: "As he rose up to gaze upon the face of Christ, Jesus Christ stretched out His most holy hands for him to kiss; and when Brother John had kissed them, he drew near and leaned upon the breast of Jesus and embraced and kissed Him; and Christ in like manner embraced and kissed him." S. Margaret Mary tells us: "He made me repose for a long time upon His Sacred Bosom, where He discovered to me the marvels of His love." And again "He held me for the space of two or three hours

[92] *Homil. in Evangelia*, 30. 2.

[93] *Prayer to Jesus Crucified*: Ore meo Te contingo et ardenter ad me stringo. In Te meum cor intingo et ferventi corde lingo. Me totum in Te traice.

[94] *Stabat Mater*: Fac me plagis vulnerari, cruce fac inebriari et cruore Filii.

[95] *Anima Christi*: Sanguis Christi inebria me.

[96] Bacci, *Life of S. Philip Neri*, Eng. trans. 1868 [2], p. 126.

[97] F. M. Capes, *S. Catherine de' Ricci*, p. 57. To a sceptical sister Catherine said while ecstatic, "Who do you think I am? Catherine or Jesus?" "You are Jesus!" cried the sister (p. 75).

with my lips pressed to the wound of His Sacred Heart." [98] We read frequently of such loving embraces in the revelations of S. Gertrude.[99]

Thus comments William James [1] : "Assurances of His love, intimacies and caresses and compliments of the most absurd and puerile sort, addressed by Christ to Gertrude as an individual, form the tissue of this paltry-minded recital." A criticism based on the ideal of infinite reverence would be relevant; for ordinary people, soiled with concupiscence and sin, dare not mechanically imitate the pure love of the saints. But it is incredibly crass to urge that a soul may not have a personal love for Christ or that Christ does not love a soul "as an individual." As if Christianity were the abstract worship of an ideal and not the enthusiastic devotion to a Person; as if Christ's infinite love were not concentrated on each just as if there were none beside!

Has not Jesus Himself set His seal on the humanness, so to speak, of our relations with Him? He will not call us servants but friends. (*S. John* 15. 15.) "You are the men who have stood by Me in My trials" (*S. Luke* 22. 28), said our Lord to His Apostles. And He had sorrowfully to add, "Even you will all be scandalized in Me to-night" (*S. Matthew* 26. 31.) Yet as a last appeal He took with Him to His agony His three favoured friends, whose slumber He then lovingly excused. And as they slept, stretched there beneath the moonlit olive-trees, was He not comforted, not only by the angelic messenger, but by the countless faithful ones who would watch and pray during their "holy hour" who separated in sequence of time but nigh to His eternal gaze,[2] would kneel beside Him and drink his chalice? And as His pain-racked form was raised aloft on the Hill of Golgotha, as His blood-clotted eyes looked down on a sea of mocking hardened faces, did He not feel the stream of adoring love which down the centuries was to

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[98] Paray-le-Monial *Life,* Eng. trans. 1912, pp. 62, 94.

[99] *Legatus divinae pietatis* iii. 4, 21, 49, 51, 63, etc.

[1] *Varieties of Religious Experiences,* 1906 [12], p. 345.

[2] "Holy Father, keep them in Thy name whom Thou hast given Me. . . . And not for them only do I pray, but for those also who through their word shall believe in Me."—*S. John* 17. 11, 20.

converge on the Crucified? "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." (*S. John* 12. 32.) Peter crucified head downwards, following his Master at last; Ignatius of Antioch crying "My Love is crucified"; the innumerable souls whose last earthly gaze is fized on the crucifix; and every one of us who has knelt before the image of Christ Crucified, or made the Stations of the Cross or stood in spirit on Calvary with Mary, His Mother; all are joining in reparation to the Heart of Jesus. Seen in this eternal perspective, is there not a wondrous and touching reality in Fr. Doyle's climbing up to the life-size crucifix and kissing the pallid face of the Crucified? It is just such simple, artless love which discerns the ever-present significance of the Life of Christ.

It is this realisation of our Lord's life which distinguishes Catholic piety from mere historical moralising. S. Ignatius's "composition of place" is but the expression of it. In meditating on the Nativity, he tells us, I am "to see our Lady and Joseph and the handmaid and the infant Jesus after He is born, making myself a poor unworthy little servant, looking at them, contemplating them and serving them in their needs as if I were there present, with all possible readiness and reverence." "Set out for Bethlehem," says Blosius[3]; "enter the stable . . . genuflect before the divine crib; embrace the tender little feet of your Redeemer, kiss them again and again." So S. Gertrude on Christmas night received the divine Infant into her heart.[4] We can even now, she tells us, wash Christ's feet and pour ointment on His head; even now we can console Him in His passion.[5] Similar is the advice of Richard Rolle of Hampole. "Cast thine eye on somewhat," he says,[6] "and keep it there while thou makest thy prayers; for this helps much to the stabling of thine heart. And paint there thy Lord as He was on the cross. Think on His feet and hands that were nailed to the tree, and on the wide wound in His side through

[3] *Canon vitae spiritualis* 20.3; Freiburg 1907, p. 54.
[4] *Legatus* ii. 6 and 16.
[5] *Ibid.* iv. 46 and 26.
[6] *Our Daily Work:* in *The Form of Perfect Living and other Prose Treatises*, ed. G. Hodgson, 1910, pp. 123 f. See also B. Henry Suso's Candlemas meditation.—*Life* c. 12.

the which way is made to thee to win His heart. . . . Think thou seest His wounds streaming of blood and falling down on the earth; and fall thou down and lick up that blood sweetly, with tears kissing the earth, with remembrance for that rich treasure which for thy sins was shed."

There has been indeed a tendency in certain schools of mysticism to belittle contemplation of our Lord's Life and Death, or at least to regard it as an exercise suited only to the lower grades of prayer. But the greatest mystics do not speak thus. "Sometimes indeed in the height of contemplation and pure intuition of the divinity," says S. John of the Cross,[7] "the soul does not remember the Sacred Humanity." "But for all this," he adds, "studiously to forget it is by no means right, for the contemplation of the sacred Humanity and loving meditation on it will help us up to all good, and it is by it that we shall most easily ascend to the highest state of union." Jesuit writers are usually very emphatic in repudiating the suggestion that one may ignore the Incarnation. "It is absurd and impious," declares Père Grou,[8] "that there can be any prayer from which the Humanity of Christ is and ought to be excluded as an object not sufficiently sublime. Such an idea can be nothing but an illusion of the devil."

It is true that spiritual writers distinguish between carnal and spiritual love of Christ. "A good thing is this carnal love of Christ," says S. Bernard,[9] "enabling us, as it does, to live, not a carnal but a spiritual life, and to conquer and contemn the world. As it progresses it will become rational, and will have reached perfection when it changes to spiritual."

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[7] *Ascent of Mount Carmel* iii. 1, 13; Eng. trans. 1906, p. 248. The view that the ideal prayer is perfectly imageless and bodiless (e. g. Albertus Magnus, *De adhaerendo Deo* c. 10; *Cloud of Unknowing and other Treatises*, ed. J. McCann, 1924, pp. 26, 33, 180) is due to the neo-platonism of pseudo-Dionysius.

[8] *Spiritual Maxims* No. 5; Eng. trans. 1910[5], p. 42. Cf. Suso, *Life* ch. 2. "The practice of the presence of Christ," says S. Teresa (*Life* 12.4), "is profitable in all states of prayer; it is a sure way of advancing from the first to the second state, and in the latter stages it secures us against the wiles of the devil." Franciscan mysticism has always centred round the Crucified; Cf. Longpre, La theol. myst. de S. Bonaventure: *Arch. Fran. Hist.* 14 (1921) 69 f. See our Lord's reply to S. Gertrude's scruple lest her crucifix should prevent interior graces.—*Legatius* iii. 43.

[9] Sermon 20 on the Canticle of Canticles—Eng. trans., Dublin 1920; i. 205.

We may express this distinction by equating to carnal love that modern cult of Christ as a mere Man, which even positivists profess; whereas the spiritual love of Christ is that which discerns His Divinity. "I say not," explains Walter Hilton,[10] "that we should refuse the Manhood of Jesus and separate God from Man. But thou shalt in Jesus Man behold, fear, admire and love spiritually the Godhead; and so shalt thou, without separating them, love God in Man and both God and Man spiritually and fleshly." [11]

[10] *Scale of Perfection* ii. 11; Art & Book Co. 1901, p. 232.

[11] In addition to the quotation on p. 256 here are a few excerpts from letters of Fr. Doyle. "You do not trust our Lord enough; you regard Him far too much as a strict Judge, rather than as a loving forgiving Friend." "Try every day to make of Him more and more a dear personal Friend. He wants familiarity and love from you more than worship." "Try to get down low and follow out what He Himself taught: 'Become as little children.' This will make you more confiding, more trustful, and more naturally loving, which sometimes we are not, our love for Him being much too formal and prim."

Chapter VIII

THE VICTIM

(I.) REPARATION

NOW that we have superadded to our analysis of Christian asceticism some consideration of the Christian's union with and love of his Master, we are in a position to carry further our study of the significance of pain and suffering in the life of a follower of Christ. In the lives of the saints there is something deeper than mere asceticism. Pain has profounder and more mysterious functions than simply to serve as spiritual athletics. The problem of suffering is indeed one whose speculative solution well nigh baffles the human intellect; yet in real life and practice it is solved and overcome by the disciples of the Crucified. One has only to think of Calvary to realise how inadequate are the common-sense categories of asceticism to explain the cross. Beyond the terms of will and passion, of reason and sensuality, there is something ineffably deeper and more mysterious in the economy of penance and suffering. The Christian view of sin presupposes the reality of the moral order of which sin is a violation, it implies the necessity of atonement by an inscrutable law of holiness which is of the essence of God's nature. The pagan lightly says: "Why should I be afraid of any of my errors when I can say, See that you do it no more, now I forgive you." [1] Far different is the language of the Christian. Christ came "to give His life as a ransom for all" (*S. Matthew* 20. 28); He "died for our sins" (*I Cor.* 15. 3); "His ownself bore our sins in His body upon the tree, that we being dead to sins should live to justice." (*I Peter* 2. 24.) "Unto you," says S. Paul (*Phil.* 1, 29), "it is given for Christ, not only to believe in Him but also to suffer for Him." "I fill up," he

[1] Seneca, *De ira,* iii. 36. 3.

says, "those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body which is the Church." (*Col.* 1. 24.) We cannot adequately explain in words nor can we by general reasoning reach the profound and mysterious process of reconciliation with God. But the atonement of Christ, viewed in the light of faith, enables us to perceive the inner nature of sin and redemption. "Mere repentance," says St. Athanasius,[2] "would not maintain what is reasonable with respect to God . . . nor does it recover from man his (corrupt) nature; it simply means cessation from acts of sin. If sin were merely a wrongdoing and involved no consequent corruption, repentance might well suffice. But this is not the case. When once transgression had begun, man fell into the power of a corrupt nature and lost the grace of being in God's image." Our redemption was effected only when Christ, "taking from our bodies one of like nature, gave it over to death in the stead of all and offered it to the Father. And this He did out of love for man. His purpose therein was twofold. (1) As we all died in Him, so by His death the law due to man's corruption might be abrogated, since its power was exhausted in the Lord's body and no longer held against men of like nature. (2) As men had originally turned to corruption, He might now turn them to incorruption and quicken them from death to life, by His appropriation of a human body and by the grace of His resurrection." Thus we see from the glorious dogma of our Redemption that Christ's assumption of our humanity implies a wondrous solidarity and mystic union between us and Him.[3]

This union is not merely moral or legal; it is a real, though supernatural, union which, for lack of a better word, we may call mystic. Unless we grasp the intense reality of this union, so vividly pictured by S. Paul as an actual incorporation with Christ,[4] we shall never understand Catholic theology,

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[2] *De incarnatione*, vii. 3; viii. 4.

[3] Compare St. Thomas's teaching that there is a real physical efficiency in Christ's passion and resurrection.—*Summa*, p. 3, q 48, a 6, ad 2; q 56, a 1, ad 3.

[4] *Eph.* 3 6: co-body (*syssoma*)—the word is a neologism of S. Paul.—Prat, *Théol. de S. Paul* 2 (1913[3]) 40. Compare (ibid pp. 52 f) the list of strange words, created or resuscitated by S. Paul, to express this union: to co-suffer, to be co-crucified and co-buried, to co-reign and co-inherit, etc., with Christ.

asceticism and mysticism. The Christian ascetic is an abstraction; no disciple of Christ is merely an ascetic. When Ignatius advocated the sternest ascetic programme ever traced for a religious Order—"continual mortification in all things"—he prescribed it to his followers as the means which would help them "to be clothed with the same garment and insignia as their Master, for His love and reverence." [5] This imitation of Christ is not done from without in order to reproduce His characteristics. We imitate Christ in order to continue Him, to prolong His life into ours, to build up and complete the mystic Christ who incorporates and includes both Jesus and us. We thus come to understand better that ideal of co-conscious union with Christ which has already been described. It may be expressed in the words of a message found in the notebook of a nun whose life influenced Fr. Doyle: [6]

"From henceforth you must have no will of your own. Put Me in place of your will in such a way that I may act by you. When you work, I work by you; when you rest, I rest in you; in a word you must no longer act, but I in you. Have no will but Mine. I see with your eyes, I work with your hands, I speak with your mouth, I pray by you. And as My greatest desire was ever to suffer, I shall still suffer in and by you. Be then ready and prepared to suffer. My Passion is thus continued and by suffering in My elect I apply it to souls."

Even as regards our own sins, the satisfaction we make is not something of our own which we, as it were, apply externally and add from the outside to the infinite satisfaction of Christ. "The satisfaction of Christ," says S. Thomas, "has effect in us in so far as we are incorporated with Him." "The Head and the members are, as it were, one mystical person; and therefore the satisfaction of Christ pertains to all the faithful as to His own members." [7] The universal sacrifice of Christ does not exempt us from the individual

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[5] See above page 178.

[6] L. Chasle, *Soeur Marie du Divin Coeur, née Droste zu Vischering*, Paris 1906 [2], pp. 91 f; Eng. trans. (*Sister Mary of the Divine Heart*), 1911 [3], pp. 86 f.

[7] *Summa* 3, q 49, a 3, ad 3; 3, q 48, a 2, ad 1.

duty of sacrifice; but as members of Christ we must offer this sacrifice in union with our Head and Highpriest. "Left to myself," writes Père Olivaint in his Journal,[8] "I could never have expiated. . . . He, my Victim, offers these expiations to His Father; and from the depths of my misery I can offer them with Him. Thus in a sense every man becomes a priest to offer them with Him. I then should not offer personal expiation? But that would leave something wanting to the Passion of Jesus. Ah! my expiations, which would be valueless if they were alone, are not added to His in vain. In adopting them He communicates to them the value of His own."

In the order of time, indeed, Christ suffers no more. In His personal humanity He can no longer endure pain and humiliation. But we, His mystical Body, can. "The Church is His Body and the completing of Him who fills all in all." (*Ephes.* 1. 23.) Hence it is that S. Paul could say, as already cited: "I fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His Body which is the Church." (*Col.* 1. 24.) And this function, this association in the redemptive work of Jesus Christ, is not an ideal applicable merely to great saints and mystics; it is a function to be filled by all true Christians, each in his measure filling up the lacunae, every good life linking itself up into the wondrous unity of the moral order. Though we may not always advert to it, when we speak of the imitation of Christ and of reparation to the Sacred Heart, we are presupposing this prolongation and extension of the Saviour's life into ours.

The first great revelation of the Heart of Jesus is contained in the seventh chapter of S. Luke's Gospel. "Dost thou see this woman?" said Christ to Simon. "I entered into thy house, *thou* gavest Me no water for My feet—but *she* with tears hath washed My feet and with her hair hath wiped them. *Thou* gavest Me no kiss—but *she,* since she came in, hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil *thou* didst not

[8] *Journal,* Paris 1922[2], ii. 278.

anoint—but *she* with ointment hath anointed My feet. . . . She hath loved much." This detailed antithesis, this careful balancing of neglect with service, this sensitive juxtaposition of Simon and Magdalen in the Heart of Christ, contains the essence of the idea of reparation. That is, if our Lord's life and mission is more than a simple historical event and is still accessible to us who live in these latter days.[9] Many a Simon nowadays treats Christ with studied slight and scorn, and we—is the rôle of Magdalen closed to us? Cannot Christ still address the sinner, "Thou . . . but she . . . ?" Cannot *our* loving much even now prevail and repair? And to the solitary adorer does there not still from the Tabernacle come the whisper, "The nine—where are they?" (*S. Luke* 17. 17.)

The Gethsemane agony has passed nigh two thousand years ago. Yet here is the message to S. Margaret Mary: "Every night between Thursday and Friday I will make thee share in the mortal sadness which I was pleased to feel in the Garden of Olives. . . . In order to bear Me company, . . . thou shalt rise between eleven o'clock and midnight and remain prostrate with Me for an hour, not only to appease the divine anger by begging mercy for sinners, but also to mitigate in some way the bitterness which I felt at that time on finding Myself abandoned by My apostles, which obliged Me to reproach them for not being able to watch one hour with Me." [10]

Since the day on which "they laid the cross" on Simon of Cyrene "to carry after Jesus" (*S. Luke* 23. 26), many a faithful one has sprung forward to carry the Master's cross. And shall we say, Too late? Is the Cyrenaean alone to be Christ's cross-bearer? Surely, that were to deny the eternal significance and ever-present reality of Christ's Sacrifice. Does not Paul himself declare "I have been crucified with Christ" (*Gal.* 2. 20)? And he added significantly: "So it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me."

Thus, warranted even by Scripture, we rightly use the present tense to express our relation to the Life and Passion

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[9] See also pp. 110 f.

[10] *Life of Bl. Margaret Mary Alacoque* (Paray-le-Monial), Eng. trans. [1912], p. 68.

of Christ. For we are told that those "who have fallen away . . . crucify again the Son of God and make Him a mockery." (*Heb.* 6. 6.) And as Christ could say of deeds done to the members of His mystic body "you have done it to Me" (*Matth.* 25. 40), so could He tell Saul on the road to Damascus, "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting." (*Acts* 9. 5.)

But we must not misinterpret this language so as to imply that Christ can suffer now either in heaven or in the Blessed Sacrament. This latter implication is one to which some of the current devotional literature on reparation may easily be wrested. "Certain pious folks," says Abbot Vonier,[11] "have not been proof against that weakness of the human mind—the tendency of multiplying lives because the first life somehow seems to lack fulness and sufficiency. Not a small amount of modern eucharistic literature is tainted with this tendency. Good men and pious men make of the Eucharistic Presence a kind of second existence of Christ, a kind of mortal career that goes on for ever and ever, a kind of self-abasement on the part of the Son of God, greater even than His first abasement."

On the other hand, we must not fall into the opposite error and depreciate in any way the mysterious reality and perennial efficacy of the Sacrifice of the Mass. Christ's sacrifice on the Cross was essentially His self-offering to God in full loving obedience; the suffering of a bloody death was a secondary material element. "Christ loved you," says S. Paul,[12] "and gave *Himself* for us as an offering and a sacrifice of sweet savour to God." The Mass is essentially this self-offering of Christ in union with His mystical body. The

[11] *The Personality of Christ*, 1922 [3], ch. 23, pp. 163 f. Cf. *ibid.* p. 167, where Abbot Vonier rightly interprets a passage of S. Thomas (*Summa* 3, q 76, a 8) as an "energetic condemnation on the part of Aquinas of the idea of Christ being shut up, a prisoner as it were, in material surroundings, though it be under a eucharistic transformation" Hence the current expression "Prisoner of Love," which Fr. Doyle uses in his correspondence, should be employed only with caution.

[12] *Ephes.* 5.2; similarly *Gal.* 1. 3–4, 1 *Tim.* 2.6, *Tit.* 2.14. The "self" offered is the humanity of Christ assumed into the hypostasis of the Word.

eucharistic sacrifice is the form, adapted to the Church on earth, of the heavenly sacrifice of Christ, of which we read: "We have such a High Priest, seated at the right hand of the throne of Majesty in heaven, where He ministers in the Sanctuary, in that true Tabernacle set up by the Lord and not by man." (*Heb.* 8. 1–2.) This continuous offering of Christ's Humanity to the Creator is not merely the virtual continuation of the cross-sacrifice but rather its fruit; nor yet is it the actual substantial repetition of the unique sacrifice of Calvary.

This heavenly sacrifice of Christ can also be regarded as the offering of Christ, our representative and head, and as intimately related to the acts of self-offering of His members on earth. The Mass is the common sacrifice of Christ and His mystic body. "To offer Jesus to God is not at all to offer someone entirely not ourselves. Have we forgotten that the entire Christ embraces not only Jesus, the Son of Mary, but every one of us called as a Christian to compose His mystical body?" [13] "When we do these things," says S. Gregory the Great,[14] "we must sacrifice ourselves to God in contrition of the heart; for we, who celebrate the mysteries of the Lord's Passion, should imitate what we do. Hence He will truly be a Victim (*hostia*) for us to God when we have made ourselves a victim." "You also," says the *Imitation of Christ* (iv. 8. 1), "ought to offer yourself freely to Me every day in the Mass as a pure and holy offering." "Remind yourself," says Blessed John Eudes,[15] "that Christians are one with Jesus Christ as members are one with their head; and that, this being so, they partake of His double character of Priest and Victim. Consequently, when they assist at Mass, they should do so as Priests to offer with Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, the sacrifice which He offers; and as Victims

[13] R. Plus, S.J., *In Christ Jesus,* Eng. trans. (Addison), 1923, p. 153.

[14] *Dialogi* iv. 59; Migne, P. L., 77. 428. Cf. S. Augustine, *De civitate Dei* x. 6 and 20: [Ecclesia] "in ea re quam offert ipsa offertur." [Ecclesia] "cum ipsius capitis corpus sit, per ipsum discit offerre."

[15] *Le royaume de Jésus* (1637) part 6, section 24: *Oeuvres* 1 (1905) 406 f: Eng. trans. (*The Reign of Jesus*), 1911, pp. 130 f.

to be immolated and sacrificed with this same Jesus Christ to the Glory of God."

"Sacerdos et victima,"[16] writes Fr. Doyle. "After the words, *Accipe protestatem offere sacrificium Dei,* the ordaining bishop adds, *Imitamini quod tractatis.*[17] Jesus is a Victim, the priest must be one also. Christ has charged His priest to renew daily the sacrifice of the Cross; the altar is a perpetual Calvary; the matter of the sacrifice, the victim, is Himself, His own Body, and He is the sacrificer. 'Receive, O Eternal Father, this unspotted Victim.' Can a priest worthy of the name stand by and watch this tremendous act, this heroic sacrifice, without desiring to suffer and to be immolated also? 'With Christ I am nailed to the Cross.' (*Gal.* 2. 20.) . . . Would that I could say 'a pure holy spotless victim.' Let Jesus take me in His hands, as I take Him in mine, to do as He wills with me." This idea is quite scriptural. "I beseech you," writes S. Paul,[18] "that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God." "Be you also," says S. Peter (i. 2, 5), "as living stones built up, a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." This association of priesthood and sacrifice applies also to those who are not priests, to all the faithful, who constitute "a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a purchased people." (*I Peter* 2. 9.) "Pray Brothers," says the priest at Mass, "that the sacrifice which is mine *and yours* may be acceptable of God the Father Almighty." And all through the Canon of the Mass the words emphasise the intimate union between celebrant and people in the great mystery which is being enacted.[19] The assistants join not only in offering up the Divine Victim but also, as a

[16] Priest and Victim.

[17] Receive power to offer the sacrifice of God. Imitate what you handle (*i.e.*, the instruments of sacrifice).

[18] *Rom.* 12. 1. *Cf.* Prat, *Théologie de saint Paul,* i. 308 ff.

[19] "Offerimus" (*we* offer). Before the consecration the priest prays for those "for whom we offer Thee or who offer Thee this sacrifice of praise on behalf of themselves and all theirs." And when extending his hands over the oblation, he asks God to "accept graciously this oblation of our service and of Thy whole Family [the Church]." The farther back we go the more emphasised is the collective character of the Mass and Eucharist.—Duchesne, *Origines du Culte Chretien,* Paris 1920 [5], pp. 111, 182 f.

water-drop in wine, in offering themselves as "a living sacrifice." [20]

Hence the appropriateness of the practice of holy souls who offer themselves and others on the altar with Jesus and unite their whole lives with the sacrifice of Christ.[21] "Every day," writes S. Francis de Sales [22] to a correspondent, "I offer you on the altar with the Son of God." "I am not forgetting my promise of praying for you daily at Mass," writes Fr. Doyle to a dying person. "I want you to join me in spirit at the offertory and oblation of the Host, when I offer you and our Blessed Lord together to the Eternal Father as willing and loving Victims for the salvation of souls." "Every half-hour of the day and night the holy Sacrifice is being offered up in some part of the world," he says in another letter. "You must try, as often as you can, to unite yourself to this Sacrifice, offering the treasures of the Sacred Heart to the Eternal Father for your own sanctification, for the salvation of souls, and for all the interests of our Lord on earth; at the same time renewing your oblation as His victim, that you may be sacrificed in whatever way may be most for His glory."

Thus the Sacrifice of the Mass is the living source from which our reparation derives its efficacy and inspiration. Co-operation in the great mystery of the Redemption, says the foundress of the Congrégation de l'Adoration Réparatrice, is "the act of the Sacrifice of the Mass continued by the members of the Saviour at every moment of the day and night." [23] In the gift of sanctifying grace Christ communicates

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[20] "By this mixing [of water with the wine at Mass] the union of the faithful with Christ their head is represented."—Conc. Trid. sess. 22, c. 7. The symbolism therefore denotes the association of the faithful with Christ in His sacrifice as His mystical body. Cf. the secret prayer for Whit Monday and Trinity Sunday: Nosmetipsos Tibi perfice munus aeternum (make ourselves into an eternal offering to Thee).

[21] See examples of this co-offering at Mass e.g. in S. Gertrude, *Legatus divinae pietatis* iii. 6 and 18; v. 27; etc. Cf. Legueu, *Sister Gertrude Mary*, Eng. trans. 1915, pp. 107–111; R. Plus, S.J., *Consummata* [Marie de la Trinité], 1921, p. 55.

[22] *Letters to Persons in Religion*, Eng. trans. (Mackey) 1901 [3], p. 26.

[23] Mgr. d'Hulst, *Vie de la Vén. Marie-Térèse*, 1917 [6], p. 268; Eng. trans. by Lady Herbert (*Life of Mother Mary Teresa*, 1899), p. 168. Cf. Faber, *All For Jesus* ch. 6, sect. 2, p. 166: "This devotion of saying Mass, as it were, with our actions all day long is peculiarly Catholic. I suppose it strikes converts as much as anything else in the devotional system of the Church."

to us a participation of His divine nature, not only that we may avail of His superabundant reparation, but also that we may be associated with Him in His redemptive work and that our actions and sufferings may derive efficacy from being united to His. The sacraments are true "participations of Christ's priesthood," [24] whereby we become His fellow workers and co-offerers. And this solidarity is not merely between the individual soul and Christ, it exists also between ourselves, who are all brothers and sisters of Jesus and members of His mystic body. "None of us liveth for himself and none dieth for himself," says S. Paul (*Rom.* 14. 7.) "For if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. Whether therefore we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's."

The communion of saints is but the corollary of the doctrine of Christ's mystical body; so also is the idea of reparation. "In one Spirit all we, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, were baptised into one body." Hence "if any member suffers, all the members suffer; and if a member is honoured, all the members rejoice therewith." (*I Cor.* 12. 13, 26.) Neither holiness nor sin can ever be purely isolated and individual. "If you disregard these sins (of others), because they are found in another body," says S. John Chrysostom,[25] "you are acting very foolishly for everyone is a member of the whole body." "You are members of one body," says S. Ephrem,[26] "and hence you are bound to relieve one another. . . . So the superabundant merits of those who devote themselves to continual prayer supply what those who are occupied in other works, or indulge in rest, fall short of in prayer. On the other hand, the greater merits which they obtain who are employed in service make up what is lacking in those given to prayer; so that complete equality exists."

Especially in these latter days the idea of reparation has assumed prominence in Catholic devotion. As we can see in the life of S. Margaret Mary Alacoque, it is of the very essence

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[24] S. Thomas, *Summa* 3, q 63, a 3.

[25] *Hom. 1. de poenitentia,* 3: Migne, P. G., 49. 281; Kirsch, *The Doctrine of the Communion of Saints,* Eng. trans. 1910, p. 164.

[26] *Instruction on Christian Perfection;* Kirsch, pp. 164 f.

of the devotion to the Sacred Heart that chosen souls are specially privileged to share in this redemptive work and to fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ. And, indeed, not only privileged souls but all Christians are invited by the Church to add their prayers and penances to the sufferings of our Redeemer for the conversion of sinners, to unite in loving adoration and thus atone for outrage and sin. The devotion of the Forty Hours, instituted by Clement VIII in 1592, the cult of the Sacred Heart, the founding of special religious congregations [27] and sodalities, the lives of the more recent saints and servants of God, all bear witness to the prominence of the idea of reparation in the Church to-day. "It is most fitting," says Pope Leo XIII,[28] "that Catholics should by a great spirit of faith and holiness make reparation for the depravity of views and actions and show publicly that nothing is dearer to them than the glory of God and the religion of their fathers. Let those especially who are more strictly bound to God, those who live in religion, rouse themselves more generously to charity and strive to propitiate the divine Majesty by their humble prayers, their voluntary sacrifices and the offering of themselves."

If this coöperation were regarded as injuring the mediation of Christ, Luther would have been right against the Council of Trent, and works would not count for justification. If the expiation of the just, quickened by our Saviour's merits, cannot be offered for the sinner, the Communion of Saints is not a reality. And it is only by thus entering into this mystic communion and, as it were, "pooling" our sufferings and prayers, that we can escape from narrow individualism and depressing isolation. "I quite approve of your trying to forget yourself and your sins," writes Fr. Doyle in a letter. "To bother about them is a selfish thing, whereas sorrowing over the faults of others is most pleasing to our Lord." "There is much which needs reparation," writes

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[27] The Congregations of the *Adoration Réparatrice*, of *Marie Réparatrice*, the *Filles du Coeur de Jésus*, *the Soeurs Victimes du Coeur de Jésus*.

[28] *Nobilissima Gallorum Gens*. 8 Feb., 1884.—*Lettres apostoliques* i. 238. See also the special Brief (6 March, 1883) given in Mgr. d'Hulst's pamphlet L'adoration réparatrice et nationale, Lille, 1884.

Mgr. d'Hulst,[29] "even in the sanctuary and the cloisters, and indeed especially there. Our Lord expects compensation from souls who have not abused special graces." "How grievous are these scandals!" he exclaims in another letter. "Only the thought of reparation can soften the bitterness of them. To take expiation on oneself is to be like Him of whom it is said: *Vere languores nostros ipse tulit et dolores nostros ipse portavit.*[30] If this thought had thoroughly entered into us, without running after great penances, should we not give quite another reception than we usually do to sufferings, vexaions, and the dulness and bitterness of our poor lives? And then the thought of reparation is so beneficial to poor souls like ours! It is a great mistake to think it is the privilege of the perfect. On the contrary, it pleases our Lord to open up these horizons to the weak, to give them courage by turning their attention away from their own wretchedness. If I am incapable of satisfying God in myself, I will try to make up to Him for others. If I cannot lament my own ingratitude sufficiently, I will learn to do so by lamenting for others." These consoling words will help to convince those whose ideal of holiness is unconsciously individualistic and self-centered, that the ideal of reparation by no means implies the possession or the delusion of perfection.[31]

This work of reparation is, therefore, by the fact of our incorporation into Christ, the function of every true member of His Body which is the Church. "Each of the faithful both can and ought to assist, and in the measure of his generosity enter the ranks of those consecrated to reparation." [32] Naturally this applies more stringently to religious.

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[29] Baudrillart, *Vie de Mgr. d'hulst,* ii. 523; *The Way of the Heart: Letters of Direction by Mgr. d'Hulst,* Eng. trans. 1913, p. 96, (see also p. 25).

[30] "Surely He hath borne our infirmities and carried our sorrows."—*Isaias* 53. 4.

[31] It is worth noticing that the total abstinence movement in Ireland has owed much of its success to this idea of reparation. The "heroic offering" is thus worded: "For Thy greater glory, O Sacred Heart of Jesus, for Thy sake to give good example, to practice self-denial, *and to make reparation for the sins of intemperance,* I will abstain from all spirituous drinks."—McKenna, *Life and Work of Rev. J. A. Cullen, S.J.,* 1924, p. 323.

[32] R. Plus, S.J., *The Ideal of Reparation,* Eng. trans. (Madame Cecilia), 1921, p. 55.

"Every religious, whatever the nature of his occupation may be, is, by the very fact of his religious profession, officially set aside and deputed to perpetuate the sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon earth, by becoming a victim associated with that divine Victim who offered Himself on Calvary for the sins of the world." [33] But beyond these general calls there are undoubtedly many special vocations to a life of sacrificial self-immolation. Though the term "victim" is comparatively recent in this sense, the idea has always existed in the Church and indeed is but the development of the doctrine of the communion of saints.[34]

In a very true sense specially called victim-souls are the successors of the early martyrs. "Suffer me to follow the example of the Passion of my God," writes Ignatius of Antioch, on his way to be devoured by beasts in a Roman amphitheatre. "I am God's wheat and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread of Christ. . . . Beseech Christ on my behalf, that I may be found a victim through these instruments (the beasts)." [35] It was the general belief that those who were thus continuing and sharing in Christ's Passion were specially united and identified with Christ. "There will be Another in me to suffer for me," said S. Felicitas to her gaoler, "for I am to suffer for Him." [36] Of the deacon Sanctus martyred at Lyons we are told that "Christ, who suffered in him, accomplished wonders." [37] And when martyrdom grew less frequent it was pointed out that there were other ways of being a victim with and for Christ. "You also, if you will," says S. John Chrysostom,[38] "can

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[33] N. J. Lyonnard, S.J., *The Apostleship of Suffering*, Eng. trans. 1870, ch. 18, p. 195. Cf. the Jesuit formula of vows: ut hoc holocaustum in odorem suavitatis admittere digneris.

[34] See the quotations in P. Giloteaux, *Les âmes hosties, les âmes victimes*, Paris, 1923, pp. 96 ff.

[35] *Ep. ad Romanos*, vi. 3, iv. 2. Cf. ii. 2: "Grant me nothing more than that I be poured out to God, while an altar is still ready."

[36] *Passio Perpetuae*, 15: Ruinart, *Acta*, 1689, p. 93; Leclercq, *Les martyrs*, 1903, i. 135. Cf. Cyprian, *Epist.* 10.4 (Hartel iii. 494): Ipse luctatur in nobis, ipse congreditur, ipse in certamine agonis nostri et coronat pariter et coronatur.

[37] Eusebius, *Hist Eccles.* 5. 3; Leclercq, i. 96.

[38] *Hom. XI. in Ep. ad Hebr.*, n. 3; Migne, P. G., 63, 93. This connection between a life of immolation and a martyr's death is particularly interesting in its relation to Fr. Doyle's ideals.

offer such a sacrifice. No matter if your body is not burnt by fire; you can deliver it to a different fire—that of voluntary poverty and of affliction. For to take upon oneself a life of labour and hardship, though it was possible to live in luxury and opulence—is not this the offering of a holocaust? Mortify and crucify your body and you also will obtain the martyr's crown." This is, in fact, the way in which latter-day saints have aspired to the crown of martyrdom.

Particularly since the spread of devotion to the Sacred Heart the ideal of self-immolation has been accepted as a life-vocation by numerous chosen souls. "I seek," said our Lord to S. Margaret Mary,[39] "I seek a victim to My Heart, which will immolate itself to the accomplishment of My designs." The recent annals of the Church show that He has not sought in vain. For, in addition to the countless individuals who in every walk of life have dedicated themselves to this work of reparation, several religious institutes specially devoted thereto have been approved by Rome.[40]

But we must not misinterpret the word "victim." It does not in the least imply any lack of spontaneity and joyousness. Nor does it necessarily involve great bodily sufferings or austerities. "The daughters of the Visitation," says S. Francis de Sales,[41] who certainly mitigated all such practices, "are victims of sacrifice and living holocausts." Neither is the state of victim incompatible with strenuous apostolic work. Was it not of the apostle of the Gentiles that our Lord said, "I will show him all that he has to suffer for My Name"? (*Acts* 9, 16.) And it was by their "spiritual service" that

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[39] *Life*, p. 35. A list of some of these victim-souls will be found in L. Capelle, S.J., *Les âmes généreuses*, Paris 1920, pp. 94 ff; Giloteaux, *op. cit.*, pp. 70 ff; Huysmans *Saint Lydwine of Schiedam*, Eng. trans. 1923, pp. 208 ff. Cf. the work of Père Calage, S.J., at Marseilles (1846–66) as director of "âmes victimes" and his stimulus to the foundation of the Société des filles du Cœur de Jésus.—Laplace, *La Mère Marie de Jésus*, new ed. 1906, pp. 121 ff. See also Fr. Doyle's letters of direction pp. 325 ff.

[40] Thus the specially approved Constitutions of the Benedictines of Perpetual Adoration, "I vow and promise . . . zealously to preserve the perpetual adoration and worship of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Altar, as a victim immolated to Its glory." (58. 53.)

[41] *Letters to Persons in Religion*, Eng. trans. 1901 [3], p. 105. We must also remember the unanimous teaching of spiritual writers that interior sufferings are far harder than external austerities.

S. Paul exhorted the Romans "to present their bodies as a sacrifice, living, holy, well-pleasing to God." (*Rom.* 12. 1.) His words were re-echoed by the apostle of Ireland. "I give unwearied thanks," says S. Patrick,[42] "to my God who kept me faithful in the day of my trial, so that to-day I may confidently offer Him a sacrifice—my soul as a living victim to Christ my Lord." And indeed, as already remarked, it is the ideal of every priest to be another Christ, both priest and victim. Such an ideal, far from interfering with active work, makes such work spiritually effective. "Ever since our Lord vouchsafed to give me a participation in His quality of victim," write M. Olier,[43] "it is no longer I that live, but He liveth in me. Every day, after receiving Communion, I become, as it were, sensible of His presence in my members. He informs me, He vivifies me, as though He were my soul and my life. . . . He opens my lips and closes them, He rules and directs my life; in a word, it is He who does all things in me. . . . Souls the most exalted find themselves attracted towards me with a holy and religious fervour. It is Jesus Christ within me who works these effects; for while speaking to them, I feel His virtue go out from me and pass into them, imparting to them His lights and graces as He does in the Holy Eucharist." Thus the ideal of victim brings us back to that of co-conscious union with Christ, which, as we have seen, is a characteristic Jesuit devotion; it merely adds the conception of co-redemptive suffering with and for Christ. And even this latter idea is simply the ultimate and paramount motive for the Ignatian *agendo contra* and "continual mortification in all things." Not mere individual asceticism, but the great crusade portrayed in the Kingdom of Christ": "Those who are more desirous to show affection and to distinguish themselves in entire service of their Eternal King and Universal Lord, will not only offer their persons to labour, but also acting against their own sensuality, carnal and worldly love, will make offerings of greater worth and value." This "offer-

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[42] *Confession*, 34.

[43] Thompson, *Life of J. J. Olier*, 1886 [2], p. 276. Cf. pp. 294, 307, 363, 561; and *Lettres de M. Olier*, 1885, i. 390, 425 ("Victim of Love.")

ing" is to imitate Jesus "in bearing all injuries and all reproach and all poverty." And if we call it a consecration as victim, we import a new word indeed, but we describe the idea of Ignatius with brevity and accuracy.

(2.) LIFE OF IMMOLATION

This ideal of reparation attracted Fr. Doyle from his earliest years. We have already seen that one of his favourite devotions was that of the Holy Hour. Long before he became a priest he had made it faithfully week after week and found it a fruitful source of grace. Afterwards as a hard-working priest he contrived to increase the number of nocturnal visits. "Two years ago when at Tours," he writes on 22nd Nov., 1914, "I felt strongly urged to rise and make the Holy Hour every night. In the past twelve months I have gone down to the chapel about fifty times, though often only for a few moments; this does not include the weekly Holy Hour on Thursday. Now I feel impelled to rise each night, when at home, at least for a quarter of an hour." And in April, 1915, he resolved "to make the Holy Hour each night from ten to eleven when at home." How he made it may be best gathered from an entry in his diary under the date 1st Sept., 1911. "Last night," he writes, "while making the Holy Hour in my room, Jesus seemed to ask me to promise to make it every Thursday, even when away giving retreats, and when I cannot go to the chapel. He wants the greater part of the time to be spent prostrate on the ground, which I find very painful. I think He wants me to share in His agony during this hour, feeling a little of the sadness, desolation, and abandonment He experienced, the shame of sin, the uselessness of His sufferings to save souls. I begged Him to plunge my soul into the sea of bitterness which surrounded Him. It was an hour of pain, but I hope for more."

Fr. Doyle devoted himself to the propagation of this practice. It was long, uphill work, not so much among holy souls living in the world, very many of whom adopted it enthusiastically,

as among religious communities, where innovations progress slowly, even apart from the difficulty of finding room for a new devotion in an already overcrowded time-table. But the efforts were in many cases crowned with success. "Our Blessed Lord is at last blessing my efforts to establish the Holy Hour," wrote Fr. Doyle in 1914. "Up to this attempts have been more or less of a failure, but now they have taken it up warmly in all the W. convents. The Mother Provincial of the X. nuns will push it during her visitation. Moreover the devotion has been established with full sanction of the authorities in Y., and will now spread to the other ten convents there. A letter from Z. yesterday told me that they, too, after three years' wait, had fallen into line." It is scarcely necessary to add that this propaganda did not always meet with approval or favour. But it deserves to be recorded that Fr. Doyle was by no means a blind enthusiast. He quite appreciated local or individual difficulties. Thus he wrote to a nun in 1911: "As regards the Holy Hour I would urge you personally not to make a practice of staying up every Thursday night. The privation of sleep tells in the end, and you are not too strong; and if you get knocked up, people will say that was the cause and may even get the Hour forbidden. God likes generosity, but we must be prudent and not expect Him to work miracles."

This devotion to the Holy Hour is merely an instance of his lifelong attraction to expiation. As time went on, his whole life approximated more closely to a continuously prolonged Holy Hour, so completely did he fill it with prayer and suffering. Doubtless, this is more admirable than imitable; for few are called to such a special vocation. But even for ordinary folk such a life is not without its lesson and its inspiration. It is only when we see this ideal of reparation carried out to a degree of heroic intensity in the life of one who has lived in our midst, that we realise its surpassing strength and beauty. And perhaps by thus witnessing this ennoblement of suffering, we shall be aided to purge our own lives of sordid repining and fretful grumbling, and to see in every form of pain an ally instead of an enemy, to enlarge our souls by the sane and social mysticism of reparation.

"It is quite true," writes Mgr. d'Hulst,[44] "that reparation underlies all real interior life. But you know the difference between acknowledging a truth with the intelligence and discovering it within one's heart. This discovery—delayed no doubt by many infidelities, by a too external life, a life too busied with outward things—I am beginning to make on my own account, after having made it more than once for other people."

It will be convenient to collect here some of Fr. Doyle's thoughts and resolutions concerning this life of self-sacrifice and reparation. We shall thereby be enabled to realise the growing intensity with which this wonderful ideal dominated him. More and more the absorbing ambition of his life was to make himself a living holocaust, "the victim of the Sacred Heart." As time went on, all other motives became fused in this glowing zeal, culminating finally and appropriately in the sacrifice of life itself. "Greater love than this no man hath." (*S. John* 15. 13.)

It was during his 1909 retreat that the ideal of a life of absolute self-sacrifice and reparatory suffering came home to Fr. Doyle with full conviction and clearness. "I am more and more convinced," he writes, "that Jesus is asking from me the complete and absolute sacrifice of every gratification, pleasure, self-indulgence and comfort, which within the Rule and without injuring my health or work I can give Him. I have never before felt such a strong desire or such supernatural help to make and keep this resolution. Looked at in the bulk it appalls me, but taken moment by moment, there is nothing which I cannot do. By the grace of God I can do all things." "I can honestly say," the journal continues, "I do not think of any sacrifice possible for me to make, which I have not written down at the end of this book, so that now for the first time in my life I have given my Jesus absolutely everything I think He asks from me. Already I taste the reward in the deep peace and happiness I experience and in the growing desire to be more and more generous in giving. This time of consolation I know, will not last always, but I am ready for

[44] *The Way of the Heart: Letters of Direction*, Eng. trans. 1913, p. 56.

the storm, trusting in God's grace, for all this is His work and He will never fail me. . . . There must be no going back now even in little things, no truce, no yielding to nature, till death." This retreat before his last vows (Feb. 1909) Fr. Doyle always called his "conversion." In his next retreat (Sept. 1910) he was able to record a distinct advance: "The past eighteen months have shown me that with the help of God's grace, sacrifices, which formerly I thought utterly impossible, were easy enough. This fills me with confidence to face others, which I have been afraid of up to this." "I must, therefore," he concluded, "eagerly welcome every little pain, suffering, small sickness, trouble, cross of any kind, as coming straight to me from the Sacred Heart. Am I not Your loving victim, my Jesus? I must remember also my compact—anything to become a saint."

At Limerick, on the Feast of the Holy Family (22nd Jan.) 1911, Fr. Doyle wrote down (or rather typed) in the form of an intimate spontaneous prayer a further elaboration of his ideal of self-immolation. It is at once pathetically human, magnificently heroic, and intensely practical:

"My dear loving Jesus what do You want from me? You never seem to leave me alone—thank You ever so much for that—but keep on asking, asking, asking. I have tried to do a good deal lately for You and have made many little sacrifices which have cost me a good deal, but You do not seem to be satisfied with me yet and want more.

"The same thought is ever haunting me, coming back again and again; fight as I will, I cannot get away from it or conceal from myself what it is You really want. I realise it more and more every day. But, my sweet Jesus, I am so afraid, I am so cowardly, so fond of myself and my own comfort, that I keep hesitating and refusing to give in to You and to do what You want.

"Let me tell You what I think this is. You want me to immolate myself to Your pleasure; to become Your victim by self-inflicted suffering; to crucify myself in every way I can think of; never if possible to be without some pain or discomfort; to die to myself and to my love of ease and comfort;

to give myself the necessaries of life but no more (and I think these could be largely reduced without injury to my health); to crucify my body in every way I can think of, bearing heat, cold, little sufferings, without relief, constantly, if possible always, wearing some instrument of penance; to crucify my appetite by trying to take as little delicacies as possible; to crucify my eyes by a vigilant guard over them; to crucify my will by submitting it to others; to give up all comfort, all self-indulgence; to sacrifice my love of ease, love for sleep at unusual times; to work, to toil for souls, to suffer, to pray always. My Jesus, am I not right, is not this what You want from me and have asked so long?

"I feel it is. For the thought of such a life, so naturally terrifying, fills me with joy, for I know I could not do one bit of it myself but that it will all be the work of Your grace and love. I have found, too, that the more I give, the more I do, the more I suffer, the greater becomes this longing.

"Jesus, you know my longing to become a saint. You know how much I thirst to die a martyr. Help me to prove that I am really in earnest by living this life of martyrdom. O loving Jesus, help me now not to fight any longer against You. I really long to do what You want, but I know my weakness so well and my inconstancy. I have made so many generous resolutions which I have never kept that I feel it is almost a mockery to promise more. This record of my feelings and desire at this moment will be a spur to my generosity; and if I cannot live up to the perfection of what You want, at least I am now determined to do more than I have ever done before. Help me, Jesus!

"This light has come to me now:

(1) Try to live this life for one day, at least now and again; this will show you it is not impossible.

(2) Do what the Holy Ghost suggests at once—'Make this little sacrifice,' 'Do this,' 'Don't do that,' etc."

A fortnight later (5th February, 1911), he thus records "a great grace": "To-day while praying in the Chapel, suddenly it seemed to me as if I were standing before a narrow path all choked with briars and sharp thorns. Jesus was beside me

with a large cross and I heard Him ask me would I strip myself of all things, and naked as He was on Calvary, take that cross on my bare shoulders and bravely fight my way to the end of the road. I realised clearly that this would mean much suffering and that very soon my flesh would be torn and bleeding from the thorns. All the same, humbly I promised Him, that, relying on His grace, I would not shrink from what He asked, and even begged Him to drag me through these briars since I am so cowardly. This inspiration, coming so soon after the ardent desire really to crucify myself, shows me clearly what kind of life Jesus is asking from me. I felt impelled to resolve as far as possible never to be without some slight bodily suffering, *e.g.* chain on arm, etc. I have also made a vow twice (binding for one day) to refuse on that day no sacrifice which I really feel my Jesus asks from me. All this has given me great interior peace and happiness, with fresh courage and determination to become a saint." He characteristically adds, "Life is too short for a truce."

Once more (10th March, 1911), he felt an impetuous urging towards this life which, humanly speaking, was so motiveless and repellent.

"This morning (he writes) during meditation I again felt that mysterious appeal from our Blessed Lord for a life of *absolute, complete sacrifice of every comfort.* I see and feel now, without a shadow of a doubt, as certainly as if Jesus Himself appeared and spoke to me, that He wants me to give up *now* and *for ever* all self-indulgence, to look on myself as not being free in the matter. That being so how can I continue my present manner of life, of a certain amount of generosity, fervent one day and then the next day giving in to self in everything?

"When a little unwell, or when I have a slight headache, I lie down, give up work, indulge myself in the refectory. I see that I lose immensely by this, for that is the time of great merit, and Jesus sends me that pain to bear for Him.

"One thing keeps me back from a life of generosity—a cowardly fear of injuring my health, persuading myself I may interfere with my work. Why not leave all this in God's hands

and trust in Him? If the saints had listened to human prudence, they would never have been saints." [45]

"To-day, the Feast of all the Saints of the Society, while praying in the Chapel at Donnybrook (Poor Clares), our Lord seemed to ask me these questions:—

(1) When are you going to do what I have so often urged you and begged from you—a life of absolute sacrifice?

(2) You have promised Me to begin this life earnestly,—why not do so at once?

(3) You have vowed to give Me any sacrifice I want. I ask this from you:

(*a*) the most absolute surrender of *all gratification,*

(*b*) to embrace every possible suffering,

(*c*) this, every day and always.

"My Jesus, I shrink from such a life, but will gravely begin this moment since You wish it." (5th November, 1911.)

"For a long time past the conviction has been growing that God wants me to be His victim to be immolated on the altar of perfect sacrifice. Every act of self-indulgence, even when there was some excuse if I was not very well, has left me unhappy for I see clearly He wants *all.* The thought of a life in which there would be absolutely no yielding to self, stripped of every possible comfort, has an immense attraction for me lately, even though I have not the courage or generosity to embrace it. This morning at Kilmacud Jesus again told me what He wants: 'to refuse Him no sacrifice, to bear every little

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[45] Compare the saying of Soeur Gertrude-Marie (*Une mystique de nos jours,* p. 593) quoted later on in Fr. Doyle's diary: "I am sure that God wishes me to go to the end without giving any attention to what costs me, to what tires me, to what injures my health. I must no longer follow any rule of human prudence in what concerns my health; God has charge of it. It is strange, at the moment when I am most tired, most suffering, most exhausted, God asks me for yet more. He asks me such and such a thing: I must do it at once. without considering if it injures my health, without listening to the protests of nature. I must be crucified with Jesus. I must go as far as the extinction of self." Also the Foundress of the Society of Marie Réparatrice: "My whole being has turned into suffering; everything fatigues me, everything costs me an effort, so broken down is my nature. And nevertheless God does not wish either solace or rest for me as long as the possibility of suffering remains."—*Life of Mother Mary of Jesus,* (Eng. trans. by Fr. Gallery), 1913, p. 191.

pain and inconvenience without relief, to give myself absolutely no gratification at meals even *when not well or on feasts,* and to regard food only as a means of living, to increase my corporal penances.' So strong, clear and persistent is this light, filling my soul with peace, that I feel absolutely convinced it is the will of God. I have begun, therefore, to mark days of 'absolute sacrifice' for Jesus." (1st January, 1912.)

"Last night I rose at two o'clock, very much against my will, and went down to the domestic chapel (Limerick). Jesus seemed to want me to come before Him as a victim for His divine anger on behalf of sinners. I knelt down in fear and dread. Acting on a strong impulse I uncovered my shoulders, bowed my head and asked Jesus to scourge me without mercy and not to spare me, cowardly as I was. Then He spoke in my soul clearly and forcibly: 'You must be your own executioner. I want you to sacrifice *all,* which you have never done yet though you often promised. From this hour you must never give yourself one grain of human comfort or self-indulgence even at the times you have been accustomed to do so, *e. g.* when very tired, not well, travelling, etc. I want from you *a suffering love* always, always, always. The feasts and relaxations of others are not for you. Give Me this courageously and I will grant the desires of your heart.'

"Jesus seemed to ask the following: (1) perfect denial of the eyes, (2) the bearing of little pains, (3) much prayer for strength, (4) a review of each half day at examen to see if this resolution has been kept.

"My whole soul shrank from this life—'no human comfort ever.' But with His grace, for I know my own weakness too well, I promised to do all He asked, and lying on the ground, I asked Him to nail me to my cross and never again permit me to come down from it. *Fiat.*" (10th July, 1913.)

"Last night I rose at one a. m. and went down to the Church, renewing before the Crucifix my desire and promise absolutely 'to surrender all human comfort and embrace instead every possible pain and discomfort.' With my arms round the cross, I begged Jesus to give me His courage and strength to do what

He asks from me. I realised that if I prayed when tempted to give in, grace would come to my help." (27th January, 1914.)

"The past few weeks have been weeks of extraordinary grace and light and strength. I see clearly what He wants from me as clearly and as certainly, I think, as if I had received a written message from His own hand. For years I was groping in the dark; there was ever a want in my life which I could never satisfy. I know He asked the striving for sanctity, but the way was not clear; perhaps I shut my eyes to the truth for I always suspected His will. Then more light came, with a fierce shrinking from what I feared He wanted. But now, more especially lately, though I can never expect a perfect victory in this world, I feel He has broken down the defences of self-love and is reigning in my heart." (7th May, 1914.)

" 'My way is sure.' I think I can say now without a shade of doubt or hesitation that the path by which Jesus wants me to walk is that of *absolute abandonment of all human comfort and pleasure and the embracing as far as I can of every discomfort and pain.* Every time I see a picture of the crucifixion or a cross, I feel strangely affected and drawn to the life of immolation in a strange way. The heroism of Jesus appeals to me; His 'naked crucifixion' calls to me and it gives me great consolation and peace to offer myself to Him on the cross for this perpetual living crucifixion. How often does He not seem to say to me in prayer, 'I would have you strip yourself of all things—every tiny particle of self-indulgence, and this ever and always? Give Me *all* and I will make you a great saint.' This then is the price of my life-long yearning for sanctification. O Jesus, I am so weak, help me to give You all and to do it *now*." (8th May, 1914.)

"This morning at Mass, our Blessed Lord gave me grace to see what a fool I am to let my life slip from me without really doing what He has asked and implored so long—the complete sacrifice of everything. Forty-one years of my life have gone, very little more may yet remain; and still I go on living a life

of much self-indulgence, always promising myself to do better in the future. O Jesus, there is no need to ask You what You want from me or what I ought to do. You ask for the sacrifice of all and always. Give me grace and strength and courage now at last to begin, and to lay at Your feet *days of absolute sacrifice*, in which I can honestly say that I have refused nothing. My Jesus, I do want to be generous, to suffer much for Your love; but I am so weak, I give in constantly to myself. You have tried long enough to show me my misery and how much I depend on You. Oh! help me now at last, in honour of Your Precious Blood, to lead that life of crucifixion which alone will please you." (Feast of the Most Precious Blood, 5th July, 1914).

"During meditation Jesus made known to me a new life which He wants me to aim at in future, a life in which I am to seek only suffering, weariness and pain.

(1) He will send me many little bodily pains which I am to bear with joy, not to seek to get rid of them or to make them known to others.

(2) I am to inflict as much pain on myself as I can, hence I must increase corporal penance.

(3) I am to try and continue this especially when I am sick.

(4) When fatigued and weary, not to indulge myself or rest as I always do; this will be very hard, but Jesus wants it.

(5) Since constant work is so painful, I must try never to be idle one moment.

(6) In a word, because every moment of the life of Jesus was 'full of pain and suffering,' I must strive ever and always to make my life resemble His." (Retreat, September, 1915.)

"Meditating on the words of our Lord to Blessed Margaret Mary: 'I seek for My Heart a victim willing to sacrifice itself for the accomplishment of My desires,' I begged Jesus to tell me the meaning of these words. This seemed to be His answer, written as I knelt before the Tabernacle:

(1) 'The victim whom I seek for must place himself in My hands that I may do absolutely what I will with him. Only in this way can my secret plans and designs be carried out. If

the victim deliberately refuses to do what I want, all My plans may be spoiled.

(2) 'The victim must surrender his body for any suffering or disease I may please to send (but not asked for). There must be no holding back in this surrender through fear of any sickness whatever. This includes the *joyful acceptance* of all little bodily pains and the not seeking remedies for them, except when absolutely necessary.

(3) 'The victim must give Me his soul that I may try it by temptation, plunge it in sadness, purify it by interior trials. In this state its prayer must be, "*Fiat*, Thy will be done."

(4) 'Perfect abandonment to My will in every detail must be the very life of My victim, the most absolute humble submission to My pleasure his constant aim. Every little thing that happens must be recognized and welcomed as coming straight from My hand. The victim will wait till the voice of obedience speaks and then do exactly what I have made known, this promptly, earnestly, gladly because it is My will. There must be no likes or dislikes; no wishing for this thing to end or the other to begin, to be sent here or there, not to have this work to do, etc. My victim must have only one wish, one aim, one desire,—to do what I want in all things; this I shall make known from moment to moment.

(5) 'The victim should strive to carry out what I seem to ask, fearless of the pain involved, regardless of the possible consequences, only trusting in My all-powerful help and protection.

'In this way, using My victim as an instrument, I shall secretly accomplish my desires in souls. My child, do you accept this office with its conditions?'

"Jesus, most humbly I offer myself as Thy victim. Amen." [46]

(29th September, 1915.)

This last was written just six weeks before he received his appointment as military chaplain and two years before God accepted the final holocaust.

[46] The words in this line were written in his blood.

Fr. Doyle was not content to make resolutions to be a victim of reparation. He aspired, like S. Margaret Mary,[47] to dedicate himself by a vow of self-immolation to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, signing his name thereto in his blood, and thus attesting his dedication of himself to the service of Him "who hath loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood" (*Apoc.* 1. 5.) It was made during one of those quiet midnight vigils which Fr. Doyle loved so well and was written by the red glimmer of the sanctuary lamp.

"Most loving Jesus, kneeling before You in the Blessed Sacrament, I solemnly consecrate myself to Your Sacred Heart by vow. I vow always to be Your faithful lover and to strive every day to grow in Your love. In imitation of the oblation which B. Margaret Mary made of herself, I now wish to give myself up absolutely and entirely, without any reserve whatever, to Your most Sacred Heart, that You may be free to do with me, to treat me, as You wish, to send me whatever suffering or humiliation You wish. I desire to put no obstacle to the action of grace upon my soul, to be a perfect instrument in Your divine hands, to be Your victim should you so desire. I want to make this oblation and immolation of myself to Your Sacred Heart as completely as possible, and in the manner which You wish me to make it, O my Jesus. Therefore, again, by this vow, I make a complete surrender of myself and all I have to You. Do with me as You will, for from this hour I am wholly Yours.

Amen.

Feast of St. Michael, Friday, Sept. 29th, 1910.
Made at Midnight. Signed W. J. DOYLE, S.J."

This vow, made in general terms, did not satisfy him. He wished to bind himself more specifically throughout the day. We have already seen that Fr. Doyle had once or twice made

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[47] *Vie* (publiée par le Monastère de Paray-le-Monial), Paris 1914², p. 254 f; Eng. trans. 1912, p. 170 f. Of course, she obtained the permission of her director. On the vow of immolation, see Lyonnard, *Apostleship of Suffering*, 1870, ch. 28, pp. 303–311.

a vow binding him for that day to refuse Jesus no sacrifice. Clearly it is only one with very explicit inspirations and promptings who could make such a vow without ambiguities or scruples. Fr. Doyle proceeded cautiously step by step; and while anxious to strengthen his will, he was careful to avoid burdening himself with doubts and worries. We gather this from what he writes on the Feast of St. Mary Magdalen, 1911:

"This morning I made a vow for three days (then renewed it for two more) to refuse Jesus no sacrifice or act of self-denial which I honestly think He asks from me. If at all doubtful, I am to consider myself not bound by the vow. For a long time I have felt impelled to do something of the kind, but only today got light to see how to avoid scrupulosity, by leaving myself free, unless I feel quite convinced I should make the sacrifice. I did not experience the difficulty I expected in carrying this out, but realised what an immense help it would be in bracing my weak will to generosity."

It was during his annual retreat, September, 1911, that Fr. Doyle, after these tentative experiments, resolved to make this vow daily. This he did very calmly and deliberately and after much prayer, without any sensible fervour, but rather in spite of desolation and repugnance. The following extracts contain the considerations which he jotted down as well as the terms of the vow itself:

"Every meditation of this retreat seems to turn upon the vow Jesus wishes me to make. Each day more light and great graces make it clear to me that this is to be the great fruit I am to draw from these days.

(1) Meditating on St. Mary Magdalen I felt heart-broken, thinking of my sinful life in the Society. 'My Jesus, I can only offer my life in reparation—take it all.' A voice seemed to reply 'I accept your offering: spend that life for Me in sacrifice and self-denial.'

(2) If I were put in a dungeon, like the martyrs, with nothing to lie on but the bare stone floor, with no protection from intense cold, bread and water once a day for food, with no home comfort whatever, I could endure all that for years and

gladly for the love of Jesus, yet I am unwilling to suffer a little inconvenience now, I must have every comfort, warm clothes, fire, food as agreeable as I possibly can, etc.

(3) The devil has been exaggerating the difficulties of my proposed vow, saying human nature could not bear it. I have thought of the man in the workhouse forty years in bed, of blind Brigid suffering for years constantly. How much we can do when we must!

(4) Sanctity is so precious, it is worth paying any price for it. I feel I shall never be a saint if I refuse to do this. God sanctifies souls in many ways, the path of daily and hourly sacrifices in *everything* and *always* is mine.

(5) Can a Jesuit, who deliberately refuses his Lord any act of self-denial, which he knows is asked from him, ever be really *insignis?* Will Jesus be content with only half-measures from me? I feel He will not; He asks for all. My Jesus, with Your help I will give You all.

(6) I was greatly struck with the thought that at His birth, our Lord began a voluntary life of suffering which would never end till He died in agony on the cross. *All this for me!* I have little zeal for souls simply because I do not ask for it. 'Ask and you shall receive: hitherto you have not asked.' (*S. John* 16. 24.)

"I have gone through a great deal of desolation, discouragement, fear and dread of my proposed vow. When I make it—I am quite determined now to do so—it will be the result of calm conviction that I *must* do so, that God wants it from me, and not a burst of fervour. I shrink from this living death, but am quite happy in the thought that, since God has inspired me to do so, He will do all the work if once I submit my will. . . . I was consoled by seeing Fr. de la Colombière's repugnance in making his heroic vow.[48] He spoke of the sadness which this constant fight against nature sometimes gave him. He overcame that temptation by remembering that it is sweet and easy to do what we know will please one we really love.

[48] See the quotation on p. 175.

A. M. D. G. et B. V. M.

MY VOW

"I deliberately vow, and bind myself, under pain of mortal sin, to refuse Jesus no sacrifice, which I clearly see He is asking from me. Amen.

CONDITIONS

(1) Until I get permission [49] to make it permanently, this will only bind from day to day, to be renewed each morning at Mass.

(2) To avoid scrupulosity, I am quite free unless I honestly believe the sacrifice is asked.

(3) Any confessor may dispense me from the vow at any time.

Feast of St. Michael,
Tullabeg September 29th, 1911.

Though not coming under the matter of the vow, my aim will be:—

(*a*) Never to avoid suffering *e.g.* heat or cold, unpleasant people etc.

(*b*) Of two alternatives, to choose the harder *e.g.* ordinary or arm chair.

(*c*) To try and let absolutely no occasion of self-denial pass: they are too precious.

(*d*) As far as possible, not to omit my ordinary penances when a little unwell.

(*e*) My constant question to be: 'What other sacrifice can

[49] This reference shows clearly that Fr. Doyle consulted his confessor and sought permission for these vows.

I make? What more can I give up for Jesus? How can I do this action more perfectly?'

REASONS FOR MAKING VOW

(1) The immense help it will be to become fervent.

(2) Additional great merit from doing the acts under vow.

(3) I see now what was the strange 'want' which I have felt so often in my life. I have been urged by grace for years to take some such step, but only recently clearly saw what I should do.

(4) My sanctification depends on doing this.

(5) I wish to do my utmost to please my dear Jesus.

(6) I feel simply I *must* make this vow—as if I had no power to refuse, which shows me that all this is the work of grace, and not my doing in the least.

(7) Since Jesus, out of pure love for me, has always lived this life, and since I have promised to imitate Him, how can I now refuse to do so?

(8) I shall gain immensely by this vow, my work for others will be blessed, more souls will be saved and greater glory given to God.

(9) What shall I lose? A little gratification which brings no real pleasure but always leaves me unhappy, for I feel I am resisting grace.

"I make this vow with immense distrust of myself and my power to keep it, but place all my confidence and trust in Thee, O most loving Heart of Jesus."

At the end of his retreat he wrote down what he considered to have been its three great fruits:

"(1) The making of my vow.

(2) Resolution to get back my old love and devotion to Mary.

(3) Trying to acquire under her guidance the 'interior union.'"

Fifteen months later (January, 1913) there occurs an entry in his diary, which is a consoling proof that Fr. Doyle's heroic ideal was grafted on a humanity shared by us all. "During this retreat," he writes, "my eyes have been opened to this unceasing appeal of Jesus and to see how I have never really kept my resolutions. Even my vow after a short time I gave up renewing, and lately I forgot I ever made it. With God's grace I purpose to keep it every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, and to mark each day in the other book. On these days I will endeavour to give myself no gratification and not to avoid any little inconvenience or suffering." He was not discouraged, he started once more. And after another three months he renewed his vow, this time until the end of the year.

A. M. D. G.

SOLEMN VOW

"After much thought and prayer, feeling myself urged strongly by grace and the ceaseless pleading of Jesus, I have resolved to lead the life of absolute crucifixion which I know He wants and which alone will please Him.

I now promise and bind myself by vow (under mortal sin) 'to give Him *everything*' until next Christmas Day, with the power of dispensing myself in case of necessity on any day.

Dear Jesus, I vow, with the help of Your grace, to give You *all You ask* for the future.

Good Friday, March 21st, 1913.
Three o'clock"

Fr. Doyle seems to have come to the conclusion that these two vows were too vague. So he made a third vow, concerning which there is the following entry in his diary under the date 21st September, 1913:

"This morning, the Feast of the Seven Dolours, I rose and

made the Holy Hour from one to two. I then knelt before the Tabernacle and bound myself according to the conditions in the other book. I also made a promise to use every effort never to dispense myself from this vow, and to strive ever and always to give Jesus every sacrifice I possibly can, trying not to make any account of my health, but leaving its care to Him. I see clearly now what I must do, and my obligation under pain of mortal sin, and since I must mark each act daily I shall not forget it. This vow cancels the other two which were too vague and not realisable."

In this vow Fr. Doyle specified in detail the "everything" which he had promised to give our Lord. The vow included certain mortifications in food (no sugar or salt, etc.) and bound him to mark daily acts on the watch and to make 15,000 aspirations during the mission. At the same time he took ample precautions to avoid scrupulosity or ambiguity.[50] The vow was to be taken during Sunday Mass and to hold for only one week; he was "free to dispense in part or in whole for any reason" [51]; and it was "not binding when at home and if too singular on certain occasions." Concerning the renewals of this vow or any subsequent modifications in its terms we have little information. At any rate Fr. Doyle continued daily marking "the other book" with minute precision, twenty different headings being marked each day. The mind which could stand this perpetual strain was of no ordinary type. It is a marvel that his joyous spirit never felt crushed by the sheer weight of spiritual book-keeping involved. On the contrary it would seem that any relaxation only oppressed and saddened him. "During the past few days," he notes on 20th Nov., 1914, "I did not renew my vow, gave up aspirations and all

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[50] This entry in his diary (25th Sept., 1913) is eloquent as to both his prudence and his intensely human difficulties: "One thing I feel Jesus asks, which I have not the courage to give Him—the promise to give up butter entirely. I am afraid to put this into my vow; but during the retreat I have practically done without it, and on most days took none at breakfast, lunch or supper. I cannot close this retreat without making a resolution about not taking butter, for Jesus is urging me to it. I will mark down in the other book each meal at which I do not use any. See also p. 167.

[51] This self-dispensing power makes it doubtful that this was a vow in the strict theological sense.

penances, and indulged myself in every way. The result was great misery and unhappiness with the feeling that Jesus was very much pained, though I did not seem to care. I felt powerless to rise out of this state. This morning He came back to me during my Mass with such love and grace that I could not resist Him, and took up my former life again. Great peace and happiness since."

We find the same wonderful experience recorded even a few months before his death, while undergoing the hardships and labours of an army chaplain's life. But like Xavier crying "More, More" in his sleep,[52] Fr. Doyle sought further suffering, and only thus did he find peace and inner joy. "Constant urging of Jesus to do 'hard things' for Him, things which cost," we read in his diary for 1st February, 1917. "I shrink from sacrifice, but I know well He wants it and I can never be happy or at peace otherwise." And next month (21st March) he writes: "I know I can never be happy unless I am heroically generous with Him. This I have proved time after time. A sacrifice which costs much always brings great grace, joy and interior peace."

Is not this after all the final test? It was by means of these elaborately devised strivings and these slowly improved vows that Fr. Doyle found "great peace and happiness." "Everyone hath his proper gift from God," says S. Paul (*I Cor.* 7. 7), "one after this manner and another after that."

(3.) PRIESTLY SANCTITY AND REPARATION

We have already seen Fr. Doyle's realisation of the dignity of the priesthood and the close coöperation it implies with our Lord's redemptive work. This ideal of co-sacrifice with Christ leads naturally from an appreciation of the sublime function of the priesthood to the idea of a spiritual crusade, extending and supplementing the sacerdotal work and atoning for the inevitable negligences and even scandals which occur in its performances. This is the devotion which, during the last three years

[52] Brou, S. *Fr. Xavier*, 1922 [2], i. 57.

of his life, strongly took hold of Fr. Doyle, namely, prayer for priests to aid them in their ministry and reparation in atonement for the negligences and infidelities of those whose calling is so high. We have already seen how earnestly he besought prayers for his own work.[53] S. Teresa exhorts her nuns to this apostolate of prayer. "Try to be such," she says,[54] "that we may be worthy to obtain these two favours from God: (1) that among the numerous learned and religious (priests) whom we have, there may be many who possess the requisite abilities . . . and that our Lord would improve those that are not so well prepared, since one perfect man can do more than many imperfect ones; (2) that our Lord may protect them in their great warfare, so that they may escape the many dangers of the world." She considered that her Carmelites, enjoying the seclusion and immunity of the cloister, owed this duty to the Church Militant. This ideal is still more conspicuously enshrined in some recent religious institutes, particularly in the Society of the Daughters of the Heart of Jesus. These sisters are "to ask by fervent prayers, by sufferings and even by their lives, if necessary, for the outpouring of grace on the Church, on the Catholic priesthood and on religious orders." [55] In his Brief to Mgr. van den Berghe, 14th March, 1872, Pius IX welcomed the new foundation. "It is not without consolation of heart," said the Pope,[56] "that we have heard of your plan to arouse and spread in your country that admirable spirit of sacrifice which God apparently wishes to oppose to the ever increasing impiety of our time. We see with pleasure that a great number of persons are everywhere devoting themselves entirely to God, offering Him even their life in ardent prayer, to obtain the deliverance and happy preservation of His Vicar and the triumph of the Church, to make reparation for the outrages committed against the divine Majesty, and especially to atone for the profanations of those who, though the salt of the earth, lead a life which is not in conformity with their dig-

[53] See p. 62 f.
[54] *Way of Perfection,* ch. 3.
[55] Abbé L. Laplace, *La Mère Marie de Jésus* (Marie Deluil-Martiny), 1894; new ed. 1906, p. 283.
[56] *Ibid.,* pp. 218 f.

nity." And on 17th August, 1908, Pius X indulgenced "a form of consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, to be recited by the clergy," part of which reads as follows: "Have mercy, good Pastor, especially on any priests, our brethren who, walking in the vanity of their own sense, have by their deplorable defection saddened Thee and Thy beloved spouse, the Church. Grant us to bring them back to Thy embrace, or at least to expiate their crimes, to repair the loss and by the consolation of our love to lessen the pain which they inflict on Thee."

The seal of the Church has therefore been set on this apostolate of prayer and reparation. There is, needless to say, no question of pride or presumption, no attempting to judge others.[57] It is merely the just principle that those who are specially shielded and privileged should aid those actively religious—priests, brothers and sisters—who have great responsibilities and a difficult mission, and should by their faithfulness atone for the shortcomings of those who are exposed to greater temptations. "More than ever," says Cardinal Mermillod,[58] "is it necessary to console the wounded Heart of Jesus, to pray for the priesthood, and by immolation and adoration without measure or truce to give our Saviour testimony of affection and fidelity." Of course in all this there may creep in some spirit of censorious self-sufficiency, though indeed there is not much danger of it in the hidden humble lives of those "victim-souls" who are devoted to the secret apostolate of prayer for God's ministers and reparation for those scandals and infidelities which occur from time to time in the Church. It has, therefore, seemed right to show briefly here, by way of preface to Fr. Doyle's private notes, how explicitly this work

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[57] "You should love them [priests] therefore by reason of the virtue and dignity of the Sacrament, and by reason of that very virtue and dignity you should hate the defects of those who live miserably in sin, but not on that account appoint yourselves their judges, which I forbid, because they are My Christs and you ought to love and reverence the authority which I have given them. . . . Their sins indeed should displease you and you should hate them, and strive with love and holy prayer to reclothe them, washing away their foulness with your tears."—S. Catherine of Siena, *Dialogue,* Eng. trans. Thorold, 1907 [2], pp. 256 f.

[58] Laplace, *La Mère Marie de Jésus,* 1906, p. 288.

of priestly sanctification and reparation has been recognised by the Church and adopted by saints and mystics.[59]

Fr. Doyle not only practised this devotion himself but propagated it among chosen souls. "I want your help for a project I have very much at heart," he says in a letter dated 13th July, 1913. "I see more and more each day how different the world would be if we had more really holy priests. With this object I have started a crusade of prayer." "I believe," he writes in another letter (8th December, 1915), "I believe that our Lord is asking for victims who are willing to suffer much in reparation for sins, especially those of priests. I know some who go so far in their generosity as to do heroic penance, feeling He asked it . . . I know the result has been wonderful grace and a burning desire to suffer and suffer and always to suffer for Jesus' love."

This ideal appealed greatly to Fr. Doyle. On 28th July, 1914, the anniversary of his Ordination, he wrote: "At Exposition Jesus spoke clearly in my soul, 'Do the hard thing for my sake *because* it is hard.' I also felt urged to perform all my priestly duties with great fervour to obtain grace for other priests to do the same, *e.g.* the Office, that priests may say theirs well." On the Feast of St. Teresa, October, 1914, there is this simple but eloquent record: "Last night I rose at one a. m. and walked two miles barefooted in reparation for the sins of priests to the chapel at Murrough (Co. Clare),[60] where I made the Holy Hour. God made me realise the merit of each

[59] Compare the message to Gemma Galgani: "I have need of a great expiation specially for the sins and sacrileges by which ministers of the sanctuary are offending Me."—*Life* by Fr. Germanus, Eng. trans. 1913, p. 325. Also Soeur Gertrude Marie: "I wish to pray and suffer for priests. I wish that all holy souls, especially religious, had this attraction for the sanctification of priests. My God, choose souls who love and understand the importance of this apostolate! Bless and make fruitful this apostolate so dear to Your Heart!"—Legueu, *Une mystique de nos jours,* Angers, 1910, p. 331. And Mère Marie de Jésus: "I think that I would willingly give my life that our Lord might find in His priests what He expects from them; I would give it that only one of them might fully realise the divine plan. Of course there are those who do, but I mean, that one more should do so my life would willingly be given."—Laplace, p. 223. Also Mère Thérèse de Jésus (X. de Maistre): Houssaye, *Vie,* 1909 [5], pp. 270, 362.

[60] He was giving a Mission here.

step, and I understood better how much I gain by not reading the paper; each picture, each sentence sacrificed means additional merit. I felt a greater longing for self-inflicted suffering and a determination to do more 'little things.' " During his 1914 retreat this ideal came home to him as a special mission. "The great light of this retreat, clear and persistent," he writes on 1st December, "has been that God has chosen me, in His great love and through compassion for my weakness and misery, to be a victim of reparation for the sins of priests especially; that hence my life must be different in the matter of penance, self-denial and prayer, from the lives of others not given this special grace—they may meritoriously do what I cannot; that unless I constantly live up to the life of a willing victim, I shall not please our Lord nor ever become a saint—it is the price of my sanctification; that Jesus asks this from me always and in every lawful thing, so that I can sum up my life 'sacrifice always in all things.' "

On the following Christmas Day (1914) Fr. Doyle records a further step. "During midnight Mass at Dalkey Convent I made the oblation of myself as a member of the League of Priestly Sanctity. During my preparation beforehand a sudden strong conviction took possession of me that by doing so, I was about to begin the 'work' which —— had spoken of. Our Lord gave me great graces during the Mass and urged me more strongly than ever to throw myself into the work of my sanctification, that so I may draw many other priests to Him. He wants the greatest possible fervour and exactness in all priestly duties."

The League of Priestly Sanctity, to which reference is here made, was founded in the North of France in the year 1901, under the direction of Père Feyerstein, S.J. († 1911). Fr. Doyle became Director-General for Ireland and strove to spread the League among Irish priests. In an explanatory leaflet which he issued, it is described as "an association of priests, both secular and regular, who, in response to the desire of the Sacred Heart, strive to help each other to become holy and thus render themselves worthy of their sublime calling and raise the standard of sacerdotal sanctity." Two

special objects are enumerated: "(1) The assistance of priests, and especially those of the League, in living a life worthy of their high calling. (2) The atonement for outrages to the Sacred Heart in the Sacrament of His love. This Sacrament, needless to say, is committed to priests in a special manner; and there ought to be a priestly expiation for irreverence, negligence, and particularly sacrilegious Masses, which the Divine Heart has to endure from the very ministers of His altar." [61]

Fr. Doyle had this League very much at heart and had prepared several schemes for its spread and improvement when his appointment as military chaplain interrupted the work. But while engaged in this novel sphere of activity, the ideal of a life of reparation remained uppermost in his mind and once more the special form which it took was expiation for the negligences and sins of God's anointed. He recorded this resolution on 26th July, 1916: "During a visit our Lord seemed to urge me not to wait till the end of the war, but to begin my life of reparation at once, in some things at least. I have begun to keep a book of acts done with this intention. He asked me for these sacrifices. (1) To rise at night in reparation for priests who lie in bed instead of saying Mass. (2) At all costs to make the 50,000 aspirations. (3) To give up illustrated papers. (4) To kiss floor of churches. (5) Breviary always kneeling. (6) Mass with intense devotion. The Blessed Curé d'Ars used to kneel without support while saying the Office. Could not I?" "This is my vocation," he notes on 8th February, 1917, "reparation and penance for the sins of priests; hence the constant urging of our Lord to generosity." "Kneeling on the altar steps at X," he writes on 12th April, 1917, "Jesus told me to devote one day of each week to the work of sanctification and reparation for His priests in each part of the world, *e. g.* Monday for the priests of Europe, etc."

Appropriately enough the last entry in his diary was made

[61] Pius X. (Rescript of 16th Dec. 1908, and Brief of 9th July, 1909) granted a plenary indulgence once a month to priests who undertook this oblation of priestly reparation.

on 28th July, 1917, the tenth anniversary of his ordination. Fr. Doyle's last recorded thought was about his sacrificial ideal of priestly immolation: "I have again offered myself to Jesus as His Victim *to do with me absolutely as He pleases.* I will try to take all that happens, no matter from whom it comes, as sent to me by Jesus and will bear suffering, heat, cold, etc., with joy as part of my immolation, in reparation for the sins of priests. From this day I shall try bravely to bear all 'little pains' in this spirit. A strong urging to this."

An explanation of the reference to the "work" in a previous extract from Fr. Doyle's diary will help to make clear the increasing predominance of this ideal in his life.[62] From a privileged penitent, in whose supernatural illuminations he had come to believe, he had received a message that our Lord had a special "work" for him to do. In a letter dated 7th July, 1914, he describes how it occurred to him to interpret this work as the sanctification of priests and how, very practically, he realised that it must begin with his own sanctification.

"I have often wondered," he writes, "what Jesus meant by the 'work,' but I could never bring myself to ask you what you thought it was, for I knew if this message really came from Him, He would make clear what He wanted done in His own good time. Yesterday I was writing in my room a thought which had come to my mind: 'Is there not something wrong with a priest who *constantly* feels the need of amusement and distraction? Has such a one tasted the sweetness of Jesus in the Tabernacle?' I suppose it was only putting in words the grace He has given me; worldly amusements are nearly always now a torture to me, while it is a perfect joy, a comfort and recreation, to spend an hour with Him. As I was writing that sentence quoted above, without a thought of you or anything in particular, suddenly it flashed into my mind as clearly as if someone had spoken

[62] It is worth noting that even his "life of unceasing prayer" was inspired by this ideal. "I feel Jesus asks this in reparation for His priests" (cited above, p. 196 f.

the words at my elbow, 'The work I want you to do is the sanctification of My priests through retreats.' " [63]

"Now, my dear child," he continues, "I know well that one must not attach too much importance to what may be only a passing thought, due to many causes, still I must not conceal from you that the peace and consolation which came with this inspiration was very great, and the longing for great holiness most intense. Somehow I seemed to realise too that the retreat I have in my mind, and the standard of perfection I hope, with God's grace, to set before His priests will bring down on me much ridicule, but that, at the same time, the seed will fall on the good soil of many hearts He is now preparing, and will mean a new life of great sanctity to many. I know from experience that the material to work on is magnificent, but the standard of perfection is deplorably low. Surely there cannot be a grander work than this, but if it is to be done as Jesus wishes, it calls for a state of perfection which, without any exaggeration, I know well I am far from having reached."

The correspondent to whom this letter was addressed was intimately acquainted with Fr. Doyle's thoughts on this subject and has given to the present biographer the following statement:

"In response to inspirations received directly and indirectly from Jesus, he strove, notably for seven or eight years before he died, to 'put on Jesus Christ,' to model his life on the Priest-Christ, to be, as far as it was humanly possible, 'another Christ.' This was the secret spring of his holiness. It was not a simple attraction, not a mere fad, but a forming of a life of priestly holiness, distinctly asked for and expressed by Christ. He heard with attention the first invitation: 'Model your life on Mine, lead a perfect life.' And as if to secure a faithful response, Jesus seemed in the year 1910 to have planted in his heart a spark of divine love. This was the 'sweet wounding,' a grace like to that received by S.

[63] So Fr. Cullen regarded work for clergy and seminaries as his "paramount vocation."—*Life and Work,* by Fr. McKenna, 1924, p. 232.

Teresa, of which he complained. It made him understand Christ's love for His priests and His—almost helpless—dependence on them for the sanctification of souls. Jesus infused into his soul some of His own passionate love for souls; and it was this passion that made him at times seem to do rash things. It was the 'charity of Christ' that urged him, and he did nothing through mere caprice or impulse. As a matter of fact, he hated penance as being opposed to his natural gaiety of disposition; his sensitiveness to pain made him shrink even from a pin-prick. But there was no choice. He promised to be the friend of the Great Friend, to be as far as possible a priest like the Great Priest, to live as He lived and to die as He died—for the priesthood and for souls. The padre offered his life for the sanctification of the priesthood as Christ offered His life for the Church. 'When you hear of my death,' he wrote, 'you will know that I died for them.' Christ asked penance and death in reparation; but He asked personal priestly holiness to serve as an example to other priests—attachment to the Person of Jesus—so that as he had loved, others too would learn to love, not as the ordinary good Christian loves, but as intimate friends should love their Friend and Master."

(4.) HOLY FOLLIES

It is only now, after we have examined Fr. Doyle's personal love of Jesus and his vocation to be a victim of reparation, that we can properly appreciate some incidents in his life which, regarded as mere asceticism, would be foolish and reprehensible. To him "the road of pain" was God's appointed path to holiness. "When long years ago," he once wrote, "I asked our Blessed Lord to make me a saint, cost what it might, I did not realise what even a small part of that cost would be. I have never regretted my compact, nor do I now, though I am half afraid God has forgotten His part of the bargain, the process of sanctification has been so slow. As time goes on, I see more clearly that God

wants from me a life that consists mainly of two things, prayer and penance. Never-ceasing prayer, in spite of the natural weariness and disgust which often come, kneeling rather than in any other posture; but above all, prayer at night in imitation of His all-night prayer, and when possible, nocturnal adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Joined to prayer must be a life of penance, interior first of all, otherwise such a life would be a delusion. But I must by no means stop short at interior penance. Jesus seems to stretch out His bleeding Hands to me, imploring for more than that, for penance almost merciless in its severity."

We have already seen (pp. 91, 92) how even during a mission, and indeed particularly then, he felt inspired to nocturnal reparation. It was especially the night-time that Fr. Doyle chose for self-inflicted suffering. Two quotations, in addition to those already given, will show us how he thus combined prayer and penance.

"Last night I rose at twelve and knelt in the cellar for an hour to suffer from the cold. It was a hard fight to do so, but Jesus helped me. I said my rosary with arms extended. At the third mystery the pain was so great that I felt I could not possibly continue; but at each *ave* I prayed for strength and was able to finish it. This has given me great consolation by showing the many hard things I could do with the help of prayer." (22nd January, 1915.)

"Last night I rose at twelve, tied my arms in the form of a cross and remained in the chapel till three A. M. I was fiercely tempted not to do so, the devil suggesting that, as I had a cough, it was madness and would unfit me for the coming mission. Though I shivered with cold, I am none the worse this morning, in fact, the cough is better, proving that Jesus is pleased with these 'holy imprudences.' At the end of an hour I was cold and weary, I felt I could not possibly continue; but I prayed and got wonderful strength to persevere till the end of the three hours. This has shown me what I might do and how, with a little determined effort, I could overcome the greatest repugnances and seeming impossibilities. (27th September, 1915.)

It seems almost a desecration to lift the veil and to disclose aught that happened at these nocturnal interviews between Master and disciple. A citation from a very precious and intimate paper will suffice. "He seems pleased when I am alone in the chapel if I kneel close to Him, uncover my breast and ask Him again to pour His grace and love into my heart. I often press my throbbing heart to the door of the Tabernacle to let Him hear its beats of love; and once, to ease the pain of love, I tried with a penknife to cut the sweet name of Jesus on my breast. It was not a success, for I suppose my courage failed; I did try a heated iron, but it caused an ugly sore."

Our knowledge of Fr. Doyle's secret self-imposed sufferings is chiefly derived from an enumeration which he felt inspired to make for one on whom he greatly relied.[64] "Jesus has given me a penance," he writes, "far harder than any you could have sent. Even to you I find it almost impossible to speak of myself—I loathe it; and now Jesus wants me to tell you some of the little penances I have done recently. It is a big humiliation, I think you can realise it; but for that reason I do it all the more gladly. This one thing I will say: I have robbed Him of any little pleasure these things may have given Him, by deliberately, times without number, refusing what I know He wanted and begged from me.

"(1). When on the Continent, an inspiration came to humble myself publicly as no one knew me. I used to go into the church, kiss the floor before the congregation, and pray with my arms outstretched. I felt people thought I was mad, and I nearly died of shame. Plenty of pride.

"(2). During a mission [65] I walked one night barefooted over the stones two miles to the Chapel. I brought a razor with me, for I was longing to shed my blood for Jesus, as His

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[64] Cf. what S. Teresa says of S. Peter of Alcantara: "He spoke of penance to me and to another person from whom he kept few or no secrets."—*Life* 27. 18.

[65] This was the mission at Murrough, Co. Clare. In the reference in his diary to this (cited above p. 298) he tells us it was done "in reparation for the sins of priests." So also the kissing of the floor in churches, p. 297 above.

victim. Kneeling at the altar, I made a deep gash on my breast. . . .

"(3). During the winter I have done a penance which I shrink from and dread in a way I cannot describe. I have had to drive myself by vow to perform it. I set my alarum for three o'clock when it is freezing, slip out of the house in my night-shirt, and stand up to my neck in the pond, praying for sinners. I get in and out two or three times till petrified with cold.[66]

"(4). Several times I have undressed and rolled in furze bushes. The pain of the thousand of little pricks is intense for days afterwards. Once or twice I have forced my way through a thorn hedge, which tore and wounded me frightfully—for Jesus' love.

"(5). I have a waist-chain of three links. I heated it at the fire (not red-hot, of course), and put it round my body. That hurt and raised some nice blisters.

"(6). I have used the heavy chain as a discipline sometimes. It is severe, as it bruises the flesh, and the points are driven in and draw blood.

"(7). Once I made a discipline with some safety-razor blades. I admit this was foolish and might have been rather serious, as some blows cut to the very bone. The blood ran down my body till a small pond had formed on the floor; and through prudence I ceased. But the blood flowed a long time and I suffered much from the pain of the cuts—for Jesus' love.[67]

"O my Jesus, the pain of that was nothing compared to the intense humiliation of making this known. I have done what He asked, and need say no more except to tell you

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[66] This pond is illustrated on the plate facing p. 110. The statue of the Sacred Heart seen in the illustration was erected owing to the efforts of Fr. Doyle who raised the money for it. S. Ignatius once immersed himself in "a very cold lake" to convert a sinner.—Ribadeneyra, *De actis S. Ignatii* n. 54: *Scripta de S. Ignatio* 1 (1904) 362.

[67] In another note we read: "I made a discipline of some thorn branches with long strong thorns. Some of these must have gone in pretty deep, for in a few moments there was a pool of blood on the floor. I did not suffer much at the time, but very much for two days afterwards."

that I tried on Saturday night (or Sunday morning) to scourge myself as I felt Jesus wanted. A couple of times I fell on the altar-steps moaning with pain—for Jesus' love. Then I crawled back to bed, on fire with love. I must have strained my arms, for the agony in them for three days was intense, far worse than the discipline. But all effects have now passed away, except the improving of grace and power over souls. . . ."

The only further information we possess is contained in a little notebook in which, during the year 1915, he noted down some of his penances. Here are a few extracts among many: "Severe discipline with thorns. Slept on floor. No fire. Mid-day discipline (not inclined). Got into pond at two. Hair-shirt six hours. Wore waist-chain during motor drive. Discipline with razor.[68] Discipline with chain. Hung on cross. Walked barefoot on stones. Ditto on nettles."

There is one other such incident which we can describe. While giving a retreat to the Carmelite Nuns at Delgany, in 1911, he had a severe "accident." The sisters were not aware of what happened, they merely knew next day that Fr. Doyle was very ill. The Superioress, even without seeing him, heard his step, as he dragged himself into the chapel next morning, and "thought it very unlike the quick buoyant way he usually came in." "He heard the Confessions that day too," she adds, "and gave all the lectures just as usual. Some of the sisters say that that day the lectures were even more inspiring than before." The doctor, however, took a very serious view of the case. During his own retreat the following September Fr. Doyle notes "the fact that, if the doctor is right, I should not be alive now after my accident at Delgany." Fortunately we have the real explanation in an intimate letter dated 7th May, 1914:

[68] This seems quite indefensible and foolhardy. St. Ignatius says in the Additions to the First Week: "What seems to be most convenient and safe in the matter of penance in that the pain should be sensible to the flesh and not penetrate to the bone, so that pain and not sickness should be the result. For which purpose it seems to be more convenient to discipline oneself with small cords which cause pain exteriorly, than to do so in any other way from which may result any notable injury to the health."

"You may remember my accident at Delgany some time ago when I was badly stung by nettles and, according to the doctor, should have lost my life. It really was not an accident. That day the love of Jesus Crucified was burning in my heart with the old longing to suffer much for Him and even give Him my life by martyrdom. This thought was in my mind when, crossing a lonely field late that evening, I came across a forest of old nettles. Here was a chance! [69] Had not the saints suffered in this way for Him with joy and gladness of heart? I undressed and walked up and down until my whole body was one big blister, smarting and stinging. Words could never describe the sweet but horrible agony from that moment till far into the next day. Not for a moment did I close my eyes, for as the poison worked into the blood the fever mounted and the pain increased. Then began what I can only call a flogging from head to foot with red-hot needles. It started at the feet and crept up to my face and back again so regularly that I almost thought that some unseen hand was at work. More than once I knelt by my bed and offered Him my life, as I felt I could not live, and then in my weakness begged Him to have pity on me, and yet the moment after He gave me strength to murmur, 'Still more, dear Lord, a thousand times more for Your dear love.'

"Then suddenly when the pain was greatest, an extraordinary peace, happiness and joy filled my soul; and though I saw nothing with the eyes of either soul or body, I had the conviction that Jesus was standing by me—the sure feeling one has when a person is in a darkened room though one

[69] Such an account seems to disarm all criticism. "Here was a chance!" His love for suffering was as irrepressible as a boy's instinct for a prank. Similarly we read in Lady Lovat's *Clare Vaughan* (new ed., New York, 1896, p. 26): "We happened to be passing through a stubble field, and breaking off suddenly from what she had been talking about, she cried: 'I have a splendid idea! Supposing we take off our shoes and stockings and walk barefoot through the stubble field?' It was no sooner said than done; and I can see now the calm enjoyment with which Clare walked up and down those cruel many-bristling thorns, . . . till at last she was obliged to succumb and allow the poor bleeding feet to be tied up. Another day we came across a flourishing family of nettles, and she instantly seized hold of a large bunch in order to discipline herself with them at leisure on her return home."

cannot see him. What took place I cannot say, but it seemed to me as if He was thanking me for trying to bear the agony for Him, and then He seemed to ask me what I would have from Him in return. 'Fill my heart with Your love, dearest Lord,' I remember saying. And then I lay motionless, all suffering seemed to have ceased while Jesus—I can only express it in this way—took His own Heart and poured Its love into mine till It almost seemed to be empty.

"One thing more I remember saying, 'Lord, if it is really You, give me a proof of Your goodness by curing me in the morning.' When I tried to rise, my legs felt paralyzed, I staggered like a drunken man to the convent, I could only mumble the words of Mass. But the moment His Sacred Body touched my lips, I felt a change come over me, and I was actually able to give the morning lecture as usual. I suffered a good deal from the after-effects, but I believe that Jesus worked a miracle. Even still, almost constantly, I feel the physical effects in my heart of that night when Jesus was so loving and so tender."

Apart from the special and perhaps miraculous grace accorded on this occasion, Fr. Doyle certainly held that God was not only inspiring him but sustaining him while he did things which humanly speaking, were imprudent and unwise. To the many quotations already given we shall now add some further extracts from his diary.

"On this the last day of the retreat I gave up all penance, as being in the spirit of the Fourth Week. But the result did not bring happiness and only convinced me the more that our Lord wants me *never* to abandon my life of self-denial and suffering. I realised how much merit there would be, when really tired and worn out, to increase rather than diminish corporal penance." (January, 1913.)

"God would like me to be generous, even imprudent, and to leave to Him the care of my health; it will not suffer if I do." (18th September, 1913.)

"I have noticed that every time I have indulged myself, my appetite especially, for no matter what reason, I have always had remorse and felt unhappy; but that each generous

victory, every additional act of penance, has been followed by peace of soul and contentment." (25th September, 1913.)

"I see more and more that self-indulgence even in lawful things only brings unhappiness; and I realize I can never be truly content or at peace till I make my life a crucified one, and this always." (15th January, 1914.)

"I have just returned from a mission in X. Before going I made up my mind to give up for the week my mortifications at meals, partly through self-indulgence, partly to avoid singularity. I was very unhappy the whole time, Jesus reproaching me constantly for abandoning my life of crucifixion." (16th April, 1914.)

"I gave way to-day to indulgence with the usual result. Jesus seemed to reproach me bitterly, reminding me that He asks a perpetual crucifixion from me." (18th July, 1914.)

"My big regret at death will be to have given in to self so much, to have taken life so easily, and wasted so much time in sleep, etc., and not to have slaved more for God's glory." (22nd November, 1914.)

"The misery of the past few days has proved to me that I can be happy only by doing what Jesus wants, letting not a single sacrifice escape me; forgetting myself, my health, everything except to suffer for Jesus as His victim of reparation." (27th June, 1915.)

"Not feeling well, I gave up the intention of sleeping on boards, but overcame self and did so. I rose this morning, quite fresh and none the worse for it, proving once more how our Lord would help me if I were generous." (12th July, 1915.)

"It seems to me as if rest did not rest me and that Jesus wants me 'to labour and not to seek repose.' After a long sleep I am always more tired, and indulgence of my appetite really never helps me. Jesus is ever urging me to generosity, to do hard things and (humanly speaking) imprudent things, for example, to rise at night when very tired and to go down to the chapel and pray etc. I feel if I trusted Him more He would give me strength and vigour to do much for Him. But I have a cowardly fear of injuring my health. Why not

go ahead and leave this to Him?" (5th September, 1915.)

"I think our Lord is allowing my present state of lassitude and suffering and at the same time urging me to heroic generosity, in order to make me rely more on His strength. Humanly speaking, I ought to rest and indulge myself, I feel so run down; but Jesus does not want this. I must cast prudence to the winds, go ahead blindly, following the inspirations of grace and not counting the cost. I am convinced that my health will not suffer, as past experience has shown me that I am always better when giving Him all. Besides would it not be far better to die than to go on fighting against Him as I have done for years?" (Retreat, September, 1915.)

"Feeling very unwell for the past few days, I gave way to self-indulgence in food and sleep. Jesus has made it very clear to me that this has not pleased Him: 'I have sent you this suffering that you may suffer more, not that you should try to avoid it.' He made me put on the chain again and promise Him, as long as I can hold out, not to take extra sleep, etc. Great peace and contentment is the result." (20th October, 1915.)

Exaggerated and imprudent? Perhaps. But let us not be more impatiently ready to condemn the few rare instances of indiscreet fervour than we are to denounce the widespread worship of ease and comfort. "Let not him that eateth," says S. Paul (*Rom.* 14. 3.), "despise him that eateth not; and he that eateth not, let him not judge him that eateth." There is need for large-hearted tolerance even among those who, each in his own way, are following Christ. There are indeed dangers in all extremes; an orgy of blood-letting may be morbid and self-willed,[70] just as what is called common-sense goodness may be merely an excuse for slothful mediocrity. "Some people are always preaching prudence," says Cardinal Vaughan,[71] "as though it alone was virtue. I think

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[70] So Fr. Doyle discouraged "frenzy."

[71] Letter published in the *Catholic Gazette*, April 1921, p. 76. "Prudence," exclaims Fr. Doyle, "that beastly word that covers up so much weakness and cowardice!"

some would preach it to their Crucifix. . . . I think people with their prudence are often enemies to the love and cross of God. . . . Nothing is so imprudent in their eyes as that fifth chapter of the third book of the Imitation." "He that loves truly," says À Kempis,[72] "flies, runs and is always full of joy; he is free and will not be held back. He gives all for all and has all in all, because he rests in One alone. . . . Love knows no bounds but burns with boundless fervour. Love feels no burden, counts no cost, longs to do even more than it is able for and never pleads impossibility, because everything then seems lawful and possible. Hence a lover of God is strong enough for everything and carries out many things where he that has no love fails and falls to the ground."

In one that is filled with a great ideal there is always something extreme, an impetuous enthusiasm whose expression may at times be gauche or reckless. Neither human nor divine love expresses itself with mechanical precision and calculated nicety. The outpouring of the heart cannot be regulated as it were with a tap; the very fervour of devotion scorns all attempts at impersonal measurement. Every absorbing emotion seems tinged with foolishness or foolhardiness to one who is outside it and untouched by it. "He saved others," said the wise men on Calvary, "but Himself He cannot save." (*S. Matthew* 27. 42.) And did not Peter himself take his Master aside and rebuke Him? (*S. Matthew* 16. 22.) Only when the suffering Christ turned and looked at him, did Peter, weeping bitterly, understand the foolishness of the cross. (*S. Luke* 22. 61.) We, too, with our averaged precepts of prudence, shall often feel tempted to take God's saints aside and rebuke them. That is because we cannot catch that look divine which flashed on them; we attend more to the exterior expressions of holiness than to its interior intensity; we, as it were, remove the facts from their proper molten medium and reduce them to our own temperature. We forget that, as the Curé of Ars says, "to be a saint it is necessary to be beside oneself, to lose one's head entirely." [73]

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[72] *Imitation of Christ* iii. 5, 4.
[73] Monnin, *Curé of Ars*, Eng. trans. (Wolferstan) 1924, p. 360.

The severest criticism of those lovers of Christ who lose their heads comes, not from the worldly-wise and indifferent, but from those who are wise in Christ, His sane, well-balanced, uninspiring and uninspired, believers. "We are fools for Christ, but you are wise in Christ," says S. Paul (*I Cor.* 4. 10); "we are weak but you are strong, you have glory but we dishonour." "There is a great difference between being wise in Christ and being a fool for Christ," writes Paul Segneri S.J.,[74] "Both are good; but the apostle was not satisfied with the former and preferred the latter. There is a worldly wisdom which makes a man wicked; there is a wisdom in Christ which does not prevent a man from being just; there is a foolishness for Christ which makes a man holy. . . . Now for my conclusion. I shall never accomplish much if I measure everything by the rules of singular prudence and exact circumspection. I shall be good; but I shall never be a saint. . . . What shall we decide to do? Why so much examination? Why so much consideration? If we do not succeed, what shall we have done? Folly, yes; but folly committed for Christ. That is enough for us. . . . We should therefore become foolish for Christ, which means: Let us work simply for Christ, look only at Christ, have Him for the sole end of our works, then we shall commit foolishness—and we shall be saints."

The saints were certainly foolish. There is not a holy folly in the life of Fr. Doyle which cannot be paralleled and outclassed by deeds recorded in the lives of eminent servants of God. Fr. Paul Segneri († 1694), who has just been quoted, used to walk barefooted to his missions, often traversing over eight hundred miles a year in this way. His invariable custom was to discipline himself twice or three times a day; for over thirty years he slept on bare boards, his sleep never exceeding six hours. Several times he rolled himself naked in the snow and at least once he threw himself naked among thorns; as a final refinement of cruelty, he used to cause boiling wax to

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[74] "Thoughts during Prayer" in *Lights in Prayer* (Quarterly Series) pp. 305–309.

drop all over his body.[75] During his missions, not content with scourging himself publicly—as was then the custom—with an iron discipline, he used a barbarous instrument which drew so much blood that the physicians finally forbade its use.[76]

Let us consider the lives of a few saints at random. S. Peter of Alcantara "for twenty years wore a small tin shirt pierced like a grater, with the rough points turned to his flesh, and never took it off by day or night except to apply the scourge. . . . He never failed for forty-seven years to give himself the discipline twice every night. . . . To make the chastisement more severe, he would soak the scourge in vinegar and change it from time to time, or would make use of nettles or an iron chain; and with this last he would lacerate himself so severely that the blood flowed in abundance and was visible in many places. . . . How often has he not passed the whole night in the garden, naked and exposed to the rigours of winter? How often thrown himself into the frozen pond, breaking the ice with his body, and there remained for three or four hours, making a cheerful offering of such martyrdoms to God? He thus brought on those violent pains of the stomach, which tormented him during the rest of his life; but neither his infirmities nor his constant maladies nor even the prayers of his religious, could ever persuade him to relax anything of his austerities. All he would do to indulge himself would be to change the nature of his penances or give up a less for a greater." [77] S. Paul of the Cross "always wore next to his flesh shirts of iron with points and often severely scourged himself with disciplines of iron" and "he went so far as to roll himself naked in a thorn bush." [78] S. Mary Magdalen de'

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[75] *The Lives of Fr. P. Segneri, Fr. P. Pinamonti, and the Ven. John de Britto,* London 1851, pp. 19, 143, 146, 149. He always entertained "a burning desire to shed his blood and give up his life in honour of Christ" and with this hope volunteered for the East Indies. (p. 16).

[76] *Ibid.,* p. 27.

[77] Marchese, *Life of S. Peter of Alcantara,* Eng. trans. 1856, ii. 95 f. He always went barefoot; he hardly ever slept more than one hour and a half in the night, and this in a sitting posture.—S. Teresa. *Life* 27. 18. It is worth noting that, in spite of this militant active spirituality, "he used to be rapt in great ecstasies and impetuosities of the love of God; of which [says S. Teresa] I was once a witness."

[78] Strambi, *Life of Bl. Paul of the Cross,* Eng. Trans. 1853, ii. 343 f.

Pazzi "now struck her breast with a stone, now literally basted her arms and legs with melted wax, now for a long time struck herself with nettles."[79] S. Catherine de' Ricci perpetually fasted, taking bread and water only three times a week; she wore a rough hair-shirt and an iron-pointed girdle; she disciplined herself nightly with an iron scourge; and she seems to have slept only an hour a week.[80]

This enumeration is not intended to be a catalogue of horrors, nor is it to be taken as a defence of all such acts. The significance of the lives of the saints does not lie in the fact that they did foolish or even whimsical things, which they themselves (like Ignatius after Manresa) often regretted; it lies rather in the inner love and heroism of which these are the manifestations. Such acts performed under overwhelming inspiration serve, like the stigmata and trances of some ecstatics, to show forth, by their striking singularity, how high our nature can be raised and how deeply the human heart can be stirred by the reality of God's presence. It would be hard to justify by general principles many incidents in the lives of the saints; we are not called upon to do so. Such things cannot be generalised and sometimes they are certainly unwise and exaggerated. In altitudes whither most of us never penetrate, even the saints are but novices and pioneers; what wonder if at times their steps are clumsy and unsure?

Were the present book the biography of a canonised saint, no Catholic at least would consider Fr. Doyle's holy follies as unexpected or reprehensible. "If he had lived in the thirteenth or fourteenth century, his life would certainly have been the subject of enthusiastic study in many quarters to-day."[81] Whereas "the classic land of comfort was horror-struck at the recital of deeds which might have been regarded as relegated to ancient hagiographies."[82] That the saints of long ago were horribly austere and painfully uncompromising, must apparently be accepted as an unfortunate fact. What is resented is

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[79] Cepari, *Life S. Mary Magdalene of Pazzi*, Eng. trans. 1849, p. 355.
[80] Capes, *S. Catherine de' Ricca*, pp. 119 f.
[81] *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (London) June 1920, p. 86.
[82] Père de Grandmaison in *Revue d' ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 130.

that anyone should violate conventional religious respectability by exhibiting a contemporary specimen of a species supposed to be extinct; it is against all the canons of evolution.

But there are saints to-day as well as in past centuries; and under identical theological presuppositions and psychological conditions they are apt to react similarly. And the harmful results which would follow for us if *we* did these things do not seem to follow in their case. This can be partially explained even on natural grounds. "Fatigue is relative," a medical expert tells us,[83] "it is the expression of a rise of the ratio between resistances and energies. If the conditions are such as effectively to call into play all the great special sources of energy, this ratio may be kept from rising above the normal, until the whole organism approaches absolute exhaustion. Whereas, on the other hand, under conditions of boredom, the ratio is very readily raised above the normal." Fr. Doyle's perennial enthusiasm enabled him to tap special sources of energy which we, who in spiritual matters are bored and listless, cannot call into play. "I would note," says Fr. H. Lucas S.J.,[84] "a point which his biography has brought home to me more forcibly than any other book which I have ever read; and that is that in the matter of prayer as in others pertaining to the spiritual life, a man's powers of endurance depend not merely on his physical strength, but in large measure on his fervour and on his love of our Lord."

In some cases, indeed, the saints seem to have been supernaturally supported in the special way of life to which God had called them, so much so that a reversion to normal healthy life brought on physical suffering and even ill-health. Thus S. Catherine of Siena, according to her confessor, "lived without any nourishment of food or drink; aided by no natural power, she ever sustained with a joyous countenance pains and labours

[83] Dr. McDougall, F.R.S. in *British Association Report,* 1908, p. 487. Cf. pp. 160, 194 above.

[84] *Messenger of the Sacred Heart* (London), February 1922, p. 53. Cf. Küble, *Hast du Mut?* 1923, p. 48. Blessed P. Faber, S.J., says: "Sometimes our body is weakened by the pusillanimity and weakness of the spirit; whereas our body is strengthened by the strength of the mind. Hence in our work we ought to cast aside all fear, pusillanimity and suchlike, for the spirit will sustain our body."—Cited by Nadal, *Epistolae* 4 (1905) 637.

that would have been insupportable to others." In later years "she would usually, to avoid scandal, . . . sip a little water and force herself to chew some coarse food, but always with great physical suffering." "I have always tried in every possible way, once or twice a day, to take food," says the Saint herself; "and I have prayed continually and do pray to God and will pray that He may give me grace in this matter to live like other creatures." [85]

Whatever be the explanation, in the case of Fr. Doyle who was naturally delicate, it is clear that he actually improved in health owing to his hard life. He did penance "when fearfully tired" and "the result was a most marvellous increase of bodily vigour." "Experience has shown me," he says, "that I am always better when giving Him all." "After a long sleep I am always more tired," he confesses, "and indulgence of my appetite really never helps me." Tested by the Jesuit canon of discretion [86]—the absence of all injury to work or health—Fr. Doyle must be acquitted of imprudence. This is the verdict of a competent critic:

"It would seem puerile to discuss the supernatural wisdom of Fr. Doyle's ways, however extraordinary they may appear. Clearly he may have sometimes deceived himself; he may have erred by excess or have given too much scope to the strange ardour of his Celtic temperament. But on the whole we must apply to his life of penance the enigmatic saying of the Gospel: Wisdom has been justified by her children, the tree by its fruits." [87]

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[85] Gardner, *S. Catherine of Siena,* 1907, pp. 12, 132. Similarly S. Rose of Lima. Meat made her ill. "The most expeditious method of relieving and curing her on these occasions was to give her a piece of brown bread soaked in water; and experience proved in several instances that this diet restored her to her original health."—*Life* by Feuillett, Eng. trans. 1873 [2], p. 27. Gregory Lopez, whose continuous aspirations were referred to above (p. 214) found that "if he ceased even for a moment, on the instant a vast crowd of foul temptations rushed in upon him. The same thing happened if he took up a book to read; so that he was obliged in self-defence to adhere steadily and without interruption to this exercise appointed for him by God."—*Life* by *Doyle,* 1876, p. 193.

[86] Given above p. 164. "The best answer to the charges of imprudence which have been made against Fr. Doyle is that such practices never interferred with his work."—H. Kelly, S.J., *Father W. Doyle,* 1923 [2], p. 9.

[87] L. de Grandmaison, S.J., *Revue d' ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 142. On p. 139 Père de Grandmaison defends the prudence of Fr. Doyle's life of

It has been suggested, however, that "Fr. Doyle's holy follies are contrary, if not to other forms of holiness, at least to that proposed by S. Ignatius." [88] "His biography," we are told,[89] "reveals a most winning personality and a priest of great holiness of life, but at the same time portrays him as following a form of asceticism which can scarcely be considered the normal method of the Order to which he belonged." Now the form of holiness proposed by S. Ignatius has already been described in detail in this book; and the life of Fr. Doyle has been used as a living and practical commentary upon the spiritual ideals of the Society. It has been made clear that, apart from injury to work, the Founder declined to prescribe any rule for his fully formed subjects, except "that which prudent charity dictates to each one." [90] Even for Scholastics at their studies his condemnation of holy follies was not severe: "I should not like you to think (he says [91]) on account of what is here written that I do not approve what has been told to me about some of your mortifications. For I know that the saints have to their advantage committed these and other holy follies; and that they are useful for conquering oneself and acquiring greater grace, especially at the beginning. Still for those who have acquired more command over self-love I hold that what I have written about bringing oneself to the mean of discretion is better." Even in such a letter Ignatius refrains from allocating any quantitative maximum of penance or from condemning any special practices. "To follow a middle course between the extreme of tepidity and that of indiscreet fervour," he says, "confer about your affairs with your Superior and be guided by obedience."

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crucifixion on these grounds:—" (1) It was approved, in general and in its essential lines, by his Superiors. (2) It is authorised by the example of the saints, notably the Irish saints, and of a good number of missionaries and of the most venerated men of the Society of Jesus. (3) It is justified by its fruits, spiritual and even corporal."

[88] W. von Festenberg-Packisch, S.J., in the German translation of this book.—*Verborgenes Heldentum, Freiburg,* 1923, p. 239 note.

[89] Anonymous article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia Supplement* I. (vol. xvii), New York 1922, p. 271.

[90] *Const. S.J.*, p. 6 c 3, n. 1; 196 ed. de la Torre. See pp. 163 ff. above.

[91] *Epistolae* (No. 169 to Scholastics of Coimbra) 1 (1903) 507; O'Leary, *Letters and Instructions of S. Ignatius* 1 (1914) 104. S. Ignatius is here considering mortifications purely as ascetic.

So long as Fr. Doyle was in this state of spiritual tutelage, he submitted to his confessor the details of his mortifications. But after his last vows in 1909 he entered, in accordance with the method and tradition of the Society, into a period of greater spiritual freedom. Henceforth he gave himself more liberty in following the attractions and inspirations of the Holy Spirit, under the general and intermittent control of his Superiors.[92] Thus doing, he fulfilled the conditions prescribed by his Order.

The idea that, in prayer or penance, "the form of holiness proposed by S. Ignatius" is a rigid mould, incompatible with individual variation or special inspiration, is entirely unhistorical. We have but to think of the saints of the Society "whose example, in the hard treatment and castigation of the body, seems almost excessive to a man imbued with less fervour." [93] "Let us not speak of the terrible macerations of Manresa," writes Père Peeters S.J.[94] "What disturbs our moderationism still more is the austerity permitted and approved by the ascetic Ignatius when he had become an eminently prudent and wise director. The generous examples of Francis Xavier and Peter Faber, spending several days without any food, are by no means exceptional phenomena. The first generation, immediately formed and directed by the holy Founder, heard the 'What shall I do for Christ?' with a fulness of meaning which astonishes and confounds us." "If S. Francis Xavier had remained in Rome," says Fr. Paul Segneri,[95] "he would have been a good labourer in our Lord's vineyard and

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[92] See p. 322. Cf. Père de Grandmaison, *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 2 (1921) 138. We read in the Life of Fr. Paul Segneri already cited: "With regard to his mortifications, he asked and obtained general permission from his confessor to use them as far as he thought he could without considerable prejudice to his health." (p. 15).

[93] A. Oswald, S.J., *Commentarius in decem partes Constitutionum S.J.*, § 832, p. 546, Ruremonde, 1902 [3].

[94] *Vers l'union divine par les Exercices de S. Ignace*, Bruges 1924, p. 57.

[95] Thoughts during Prayer: in *Lights in Prayer*, 1914, p. 307. "He took food only once a day and made no difference whether he was journeying or not. He usually went on foot and without shoes, living on roasted rice which he begged as he went on. . . . He seldom slept more than four hours, giving the rest of the night to prayer or to visiting the sick; and slept on the ground with a stone under his head."—Coleridge, *Life and Letters of S. Francis Xavier*, 1 (1874 [2]) 166 note.

would have worked prudently in Christ, but I know not whether he would have become the saint that he was. This that I have said of him, and also his sucking the wounds, his indefatigable labour, regardless of his health though it was of such good service to God, may be said of all the saints, amongst whom I know not one who did not commit some similar folly." We can also recall "Claver's appalling penances, so shocking to the nerves and principles of the merely natural man." [96] And, apart from the canonised saints, we may assume the existence of similar deeds in the lives of the innumerable uncanonised saints of the Society, whose lives, unlike that of Fr. Paul Segneri already instanced, remain unrecorded in human annals.[97]

While, then, the hardest elements in the Jesuit life are interior [98] and no obligatory or customary penances are prescribed, the "form of asceticism" followed by Jesuit saints as well as by Fr. Doyle, cannot be considered as discordant with "the normal method of the Order," the very originality of which consists in substituting for written rules "interior charity and that law of love which the Holy Spirit writes and impresses on the heart."

The expression "form of asceticism" is, however, inadequate and inaccurate. For we are not now dealing with the train-

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[96] Martindale, *In God's Army: Captains of Christ,* 1917, p. 189.

[97] Cf. Luigi La Nuza, S.J. († 1656): "It would be impossible to enumerate all his different methods of self-torture; by means of ice, boiling water, casting himself undressed in the midst of thorns and brambles. . . . *Life* in *Life of S. Camillus of Lellis,* London 1851, ii. 381.

[98] Obedience, indifference, account of conscience, etc., as Rodriguez points out.—*Christian and Religious Perfection,* ii. 1, 7 (Eng. trans. ii. 32). See above p. 167. Similarly S. Francis de Sales intended the Visitation Order to be suitable even to those of delicate health; but exceptional cases of austerity are allowable. We read in the *Life of Sister Jeanne Bénigne Gojos,* a lay sister who died in 1692, by Mother Marie Gertrude Provane de Leyni (Eng. trans. 1878, p. 82): "When her divine Spouse required it of her [for sinners], she used to go at night into the garden and throw herself into a bed of nettles and roll upon them as if they had been roses; then she scourged herself to blood with osier rods and afterwards with iron chains." After consideration by her superior "she was given her liberty to satisfy the fervour of her love, on condition of keeping within certain prescribed limits" (p 84). It has been objected that Fr. Doyle broke rules and regulations by getting up at night and going down to the chapel or cellar and especially by going out of the house. We do not know that he had not leave; he certainly had general permission to follow the guidance of the Holy Ghost (see p. 139 ff.). It is clear at any rate that he considered himself justified in thus acting.

ing of character and the subjugation of passion. Even when we here employ the term "penance," it must be understood in a general sense, to include voluntary self-imposed reparation. The exceptional deeds which we have just chronicled from the lives of Fr. Doyle and others would be quite outrageous and meaningless if they were regarded as ascetic exercises. It is true, indeed, that some such violent remedy may occasionally be tried in the crisis of an acute temptation; as, for example, when S. Benedict threw himself naked into nettles and briars to overcome a temptation of the flesh.[99] But to suggest such an explanation in the case of Fr. Doyle would contradict his own explicit evidence; and in any case such a suggestion would be very far-fetched if applied, not simply to a unique isolated instance, but to a continuous series of holy excesses.

Nor can we regard such acts of Fr. Doyle solely as a fulfilment of his victim-vocation, that is, if we regard the function of a victim purely in its negative suffering aspect. But here, as in the lower region of asceticism,[1] the element of physical pain must not be exaggerated nor, above all, may it be isolated from the love of God. Apart from the personal love of Christ it would be immeasurable folly. "As valiant knights of our

[99] S. Gregory the Great, *Dialogi* ii. 2; Migne, P. L., 66, 132. Cf. S. Mary Magdalen de' Pazzi (*Life* by Cepari, ch. 39, Eng. trans. 1849, p. 158): "She, remembering the conduct of S. Benedict under similar trials, went to the wood-stack and, selecting such branches as were prickly and thorny, strewed them on the ground and rolled on them naked." A reviewer of this book in the *Downside Review* (January 1921, p. 68) says: "Three times at least he rose in the night and plunged up to his neck in a pond; but if this was to still an annoying temptation, who will condemn him?" There is no foundation whatever to this suggestion. Here is a self-revealing passage from a letter of Fr. Doyle's: "As a boy He gave me something of the kind, so that a passing glance at an immodest picture used to make me shudder; and until I began my theology at thirty-one I was quite ignorant of most sexual matters. That was His goodness, not mine." "I know from many talks with him on the subject," writes an intimate colleague, "that Willie found it hard to realise the difficulties of those struggling with impurity and the awful fascination of this sin, just as those who have never taken strong drink fail to appreciate the difficulties and temptations of the drunkard." At the same time he was helpful in such cases. He once gave an old stole of his to one of his penitents who was severely tempted to unchastity, with instructions to put it on when temptation came. According to this penitent, the result was great strength and victory; but if the stole was taken off during a temptation, weakness and failure followed.

[1] See above pp. 142 f.

imperial Lord, let us not lose heart," writes B. Henry Suso.[2] "As noble followers of our venerable Leader, let us be of good cheer and rejoice to suffer. For if there were no other profit and good in suffering, than that we became more like the fair bright mirror Christ the more closely that we copied Him in this, our sufferings would be well laid out. It seems to me in truth that even if God meant to give the same reward hereafter to those who suffer and to those who do not suffer, we ought still to choose suffering for our lot, were it only to be like Him. For love produces likeness and devotion to the beloved, so far as it can and may." Likeness to Christ is thus the dominant note; the pain-aspect is quite subsidiary. This becomes still more apparent when we examine some of the "holy follies" of the saints. When they are not regular acts of rigorous methodic asceticism, they will be found to be impetuous and perhaps clumsy efforts to externate intense love. They are mystic and dramatic episodes, and not mere freaks of self-infliction. Thus we are told of Père Lacordaire[3] that "one Good Friday he made himself a large cross, caused it to be set up in a subterranean chapel, had himself fastened to it with ropes, and remained suspended to it for the space of three hours." A passion-play one might say, a dramatic re-enactment of Calvary, certainly not a fakir-like seeking of pain. It would be more correct to say that it was done to lessen pain, the pain of love. "Once," says Fr. Doyle (see pages above), "*to ease the pain of love* I tried with a penknife to cut the sweet name of Jesus on my breast." B. Henry Suso did the same, and he has described the incident with such beautiful simplicity and clearness that his words will be quoted in full. While he was one day "suffering exceedingly from the torments of divine love," it occurred to him to "devise some love-token."

"In this fervour of devotion, he threw back his scapular,

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[2] *Life*, c. 33, pp. 118 f, trans. Knox. "Even if we knew we were to be tormented hereafter, we ought while on earth to muster strength to suffer out of love, because love needs no reward but itself. Christ died for love of us; let us suffer for love of Him." Bl. John of Avila, *Letters*, Eng. trans. 1904, p. 60 This ideal of the imitation of Christ, which brings us beyond mere asceticism, is, of course, the keynote of Ignatian spirituality."

[3] Chocarne, *Inner Life*, Eng. trans. [†1867], p. 335.

and baring his breast, took in his hand a style. Then, looking at his heart, he said: Ah, mighty God, give me to-day strength and power to accomplish my desire, for Thou must be burnt to-day into my very inmost heart. Thereupon he set to work and thrust the style into the flesh above his heart, drawing it backwards and forwards, up and down, until he had inscribed the Name of Jesus upon his heart. The blood flowed plenteously out of his flesh from the sharp stabs, and ran down over his body into his bosom; but this was so ravishing a sight to him through the ardour of his love, that he cared little for the pain.

"When he had finished, he went thus torn and bleeding from his cell to the pulpit under the crucifix, and kneeling down said: Ah, Lord! my heart and soul's only love! look now upon my heart's intense desire. Lord, I cannot imprint Thee any deeper in myself; but do Thou, O Lord, I beseech Thee, complete the work and imprint Thyself deep down into my very inmost heart, and so inscribe Thy Holy Name in me that Thou mayest nevermore depart from my heart.

"Thus he bore upon him for a long time love's wound, until at length it healed up. But . . . he bore the Name upon his heart until his death, and at every beat of his heart the Name moved with it. . . . Thenceforth when any trouble befell him, he used to look at the love-token and his trouble became lighter. It was his wont also at times to say within himself fond words like these: See, Lord, earthly lovers write their beloved's name upon their garments; but I have written Thee upon the fresh blood of my heart." [4]

This account of a deed, so full of heroic love and poetry, will enable us to see that many similar incidents in the lives of the saints are not ascetic and penitential, but mystical and joyous. Their object is not to seek pain but to find an outlet for pent-up love; and like all expressions of love, they are liable

[4] *Life*, c. 5, Eng. trans. (Knox) 1914 [2]. The Ven. Anne Madeleine Rémuzat did the same, the wound on her breast being miraculously healed.—*Life* (By the Sisters of the Visitation of Harrow), Dublin, 1920, pp. 85 f. Also S. Jane Frances de Chantal (*Life*) by E. Bowles, 1888 [3], p. 84 f) and Mère Thérèse de Jésus (Xavérine de Maistre)—*Vie* par l'Abbé Houssaye, Paris 1909 [5], pp. 155, 509.

to be misinterpreted and even ridiculed by an outsider. "When these impetuosities (of love) are not very violent," says S. Teresa,[5] "they seem to admit of a little mitigation—at least the soul seeks some relief because it knows not what to do—through certain penances; the painfulness of which, and even the shedding of its blood, are no more felt than if the body were dead. The soul seeks for ways and means to do something that may be felt, for the love of God; but the first pain is so great that no bodily torture I know of can take it away." From the very terms used it is clear that such an outburst has nothing whatever to do with penance in the ordinary sense.

If, in the light of these considerations, we re-read the account of Fr. Doyle's holy follies, we shall better appreciate their true significance. "For Jesus' love," he repeats again and again. He prefaces his account of his nettle-bath with the remark: "That day the love of Jesus Crucified was burning in my heart with the old longing to suffer much for Him and even to give Him my life by martyrdom." It is as the expression of love, and not as a mere freak of penance, that we must view such an act. It would surely be dull-witted and pedantic to apply mechanical criticism to it, or to regard it as a nicely calculated dose of physical pain. Such an analysis would omit the exuberant love, the palpitating heroism, the romance, the externation of inner longing, the latent symbolism, the mystic dramatization.[6] Even in what is ordinarily called mortification there is often, as we have seen above (on p. 154 ff), a de-

[5] *Life* 29. 15. Alluding to the wound of love, she says (§13) "this pain is so sweet that there is no joy in the world which gives greater delight." "I have passed through this state of prayer," writes S. Teresa in a letter, "after which as a rule the soul enjoys peace and sometimes wishes to perform penance, especially if the impulse of love has been strong. The soul then seems as though it could not endure doing nothing for God; for this is a touch which transforms the soul into love. . . . It is keen pain and sorrow, yet most delicious, coming from we know not whence."—*Letters,* Eng. trans. 2 (1921) 216. "The soul which is inflamed with the desire to love and possess God has even need of these sufferings as a sort of alleviation."—Chasle, *Soeur Marie du Divin Coeur,* 1906 [2], p. 81; Eng. trans. 1911 [3], p. 77.

[6] Fr. Doyle's throwing himself among thorns probably had in it a subtle element of symbolic drama, the staging, as it were, of his vision of the "narrow path all choked with briars and sharp thorns." See pp. 304 f. above. It is worth remarking that the saints do not as rule distinguish the complicated and different experiences which are loosely called penance; that is the business of the theologian and the psychologist.

fiant assertion of the spirit triumphing over matter, a reckless heroism yearning to test its loyalty to Christ.

The subordination of the merely physical element is also apparent even in that intense desire to shed one's blood for Christ which characterised so many saints and is particularly prominent in the life of Fr. Doyle. This blood-letting is not a form of mortification at all; it is a sacrificial act, a mystic rite of self-immolation to Him whose Blood was shed for many unto the remission of sins. "Three times a day," we read in the life of S. Catherine of Siena,[7] "she shed the blood from her body, to render her Redeemer blood for blood." S. Lutgarde [8] "began to be more and more inflamed with the desire to suffer death for Jesus Christ. . . . There occurred then in her something similar to what Jesus suffered for us in the agony in the Garden of Olives. A vein burst in the region of her heart, and so much blood flowed that her clothes were bedewed with it." We read in the life of S. Philip Neri that "when blood issued from his nose or from his mouth, he prayed the Lord that so much might flow as would correspond in some manner to the blood shed for love of him." [9] We find this desire of shedding his blood frequently expressed in the diary of S. Francis Borgia [10] as in that of Fr. Doyle. "I was longing to shed my blood for Jesus, as His victim," writes Fr. Doyle; so kneeling at the altar he made a deep gash on his breast and offered up some of his own blood; thus, with dramatically heroic intensity of devotion, expressing in a personal liturgy the immolation of his life and his co-offering of himself with Christ. In all this—as in the incision of the Name of Jesus or in substituting one's blood for ink—it is not the mere physical pain but the exteriorising of intensely realistic faith which merits attention.[11]

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[7] Gardner, *S. Catherine of Siena,* 1907, p. 12.

[8] Jonquet, *Sainte Lutgarde,* Brussels 1907, p. 100.

[9] *Life* by Bacci, Eng. trans. 1868[2], p. 126.

[10] Suau, *Histoire de S. F. de Borgia,* Paris 1910, pp. 553, 561, 562, 571, 578. The last entry in his diary is: "I desire to shed my blood for His love; and meanwhile to hold it in deposit for Him until He shall be pleased."—*S. Franciscus Borgia* 5 (1911), 887.

[11] This little incident from the life of the Venerable Marie-Thérèse, foundress of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration, may be quoted as showing how closely

There can be no question of any literal imitation of such acts by those who are merely striving for self-mastery. To introduce the idea of mechanical manipulation and self-conscious method into such deeds would be sheer sacrilege and presumptuous perversion. When Christ's love reaches a certain intensity in a man, it will then spontaneously seek such outlets; and these must be judged by special criteria. If our imitation of the saints in their ascetic practices is so subject to safeguards and limitations, how much more cautious ought we to be here, in a region where the danger of delusion and hypocrisy is so manifest.[12] The saints are not so many generalised types, wherein we can all see ourselves idealised. They are, both naturally and supernaturally, strongly individualised. Like men of genius they elude our categories; like great lovers they upset our conventionalities. Fr. Doyle was a spiritual genius and a great lover of Christ. To frame regulations for one so afire with the love of Christ is like reducing heroism to rule-of-thumb. A war-charger is not to be trained like a dray-horse, nor can a tiger be set mouse-catching with his weaker brother the cat. Fr. Doyle knew quite as much about the virtue of prudence as the reader of these lines. It was quite calmly and deliberately that, like many of the saints, he 'cast it to the winds.' He held that God was inspiring him to a certain course of action and helping him therein. And where is the evidence with which we can gainsay him? "Let no man deceive himself. If anyone among you imagines that, as regards

similar are the spontaneous outbursts of souls afire with love. "I was speaking aloud to our Saviour, in a transport of love more burning than fever. And as I was lovingly reproaching Him for having deceived me in my expectation in not showing me His Crown [the relic of Notre-Dame], I thought I heard these words in my heart: 'My blood flows in your heart every morning; take the blood of your heart, it is Mine, and saturate therewith this little crown'—my crucifix had a very small crown of thorns. I could not have resisted, I think; I took my penknife, made an incision and I marked with my blood not only the crown but all the wounds of Christ. . . ."—*Vie* by Mgr. d'Hulst, 1917[6], p. 84; *Life of Mother Mary Teresa* tr. by Lady Herbert, (1899), p. 56. We have an instance of dramatic realistic devotion without any pain element when S. Gertrude "snatched the iron nails from the crucifix which she always kept near her and replaced them by nails of sweet-smelling cloves."—*Legatus divinae pietatis* iii. 45; *Life and Revelations,* 1865, p. 225.

[12] Cf. the condemnation of the Hermanos Penitentes, flagellants of New Mexico and Colorado, with their cross-bearing, scourgings, incisions, etc.—Article "Penitentes" in *Cath. Encycl.* xi. 635.

this world, he is a wise man, let him become a fool so that he may become (really) wise. For the wisdom of this world is folly in God's sight." (*I Cor.* 3. 18.) And, let us add, folly according to this world is sometimes wisdom in the sight of God. "No doubt," says an Anglican paper,[13] "many will be found to call Fr. Doyle mad. Some courtiers once called General Wolfe mad in the presence of King George III. 'I wish then he would bite my other generals,' replied the monarch, stung to an unaccustomed wit. We are tempted to reply similarly with regard to Fr. Doyle."

[13] *Church Times,* 8th October, 1920.

Chapter IX

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

(1.) HIS OWN SOUL

FR. DOYLE had himself so much direct spiritual experience and such great reliance on the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, that any direction might seem in his case superfluous. Yet this would be a misinterpretation. It is obvious, of course, that a fully formed Jesuit, after years of prayer, instruction and reading, and a complete course of theology, is not in need of that minute guidance and detailed help which are usually necessary for beginners in the spiritual life and for timorous scrupulous souls. But it is a distinctive mark of Catholic spirituality, as opposed to all systems of private judgement or self-guided mysticism, that inner experience must be brought to the test of objective dogma, and also should be moulded by that comprehensive tradition of practical religion which is embodied in the wonderful structure of Catholic discipline and direction. There is nothing repressive or mechanically imposed in all this; it is only misguided individualism which is eliminated; when freakishness is obviated, liberty is increased. Within the great corporate life of Catholicism there is ample room for every individuality.[1] How marvel-

[1] The sense of spiritual freedom is the first feeling of converts from Protestantism. "When my conversion to the Catholic Church was accomplished, I was filled with the happy consciousness, Now at last I am free. Protestants will very probably have supposed the contrary."—Albert von Ruville, *Back to Holy Church* (1910), p. 127. "I can register one impression at once, curiously inconsistent with my preconceived notions on the subject. . . . I have been overwhelmed with the feeling of liberty, the glorious liberty of the sons of God."—R. A. Knox, *A Spiritual Aeneid,* 1918, p. 247. So also Fr. Maturin, *Price of Unity,* 1912, p. 241; Mgr. Benson, *Confessions of a Convert,* p. 160; *The Rebuilding of a Lost Faith,* by an American Agnostic, London, 1922, p. 217; the testimonies of Orestes Brownson and Prof. H. J. Ford in Bishop Fallon's *What Does It Feel Like?* London (Canada) 1922, pp. 5, 9.

lously diverse and manifold are the saints, and yet they have an unmistakable family likeness. They thought and spoke of God just as we do; their outward religious life was practically the same as ours; they shared the same Faith and partook of the same Sacraments. Thus we see that, apart altogether from any question of individual direction, there is in the Church an immense amount of objective guidance and help. Every one of us has to kneel at the feet of God's minister for absolution; we all gather round the same altar of sacrifice and kneel in the glad presence of our eucharistic Lord. And we thence draw not only supernatural aid, but also, by the loving economy of the Incarnation, natural help and encouragement. Without frequent confession and absolution, how could we keep our consciences pure and healthy and our souls refreshed with God's forgiveness? [2] How could religious life, naturally so irksome, bring such peace and happiness, were it not for the closeness of the Real Presence? How wonderfully are our Lord's words fulfilled: "Come to me all you that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you. Take My yoke upon you . . . and you shall find rest to your souls." (*S. Matthew* 11. 28.)

Fr. Doyle, therefore, had the sacramental helps and disciplinary guidance common to all faithful Catholics. Moreover, he had studied theology and was well read in ascetical and devotional literature. But all this did not dispense him from seeking the approval of his confessor or director. St. Ignatius says distinctly to his subjects: [3]

"They must not conceal any temptation, which they do not disclose to the spiritual father or confessor or superior; indeed it ought to be most agreeable to them that their whole soul

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[2] "If there were nothing else known to me of the Catholic Church," writes Dom. J. Chapman (*Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims*, 1905, p. 120), "but her system of confession as I know it by experience, it would be enough alone to prove to me her divine origin." And even William James acknowledges that by confession "a man's accounts with evil are periodically squared and audited, so that he may start the clean page with no old debts inscribed; any Catholic will tell us how clean and fresh and free he feels after the purging operation."—*Varieties of Religious Experience*, 1902, p. 128. See also the testimonies of Irish Catholic soldiers later on in this book.

[3] *Summarium Constitutionum, n.* 41.

should be entirely manifest to them. They must disclose not only their defects, but also their penances and mortifications and all their devotions and virtues, with a pure will desiring to be directed by them, if perchance they deviate from what is right; not wishing to be led by their own opinion unless it agrees with the judgement of those whom they have in the place of Christ our Lord."

It has been already explained several times in this book that, as regards prayer and penance, the Jesuit system of direction and government is not in the least repressive or rigid. On the contrary, it is graduated with exquisite psychological insight; beginning as a systematic drilling in rational holiness adapted to an apostolic life in a community; gradually relaxing as the subject grows in knowledge, character and spiritual discernment; until for the fully formed religious the superior or director becomes, not so much a continuous guide and instructor, as a court of appeal in doubtful or extraordinary cases. There is no system of spirituality so reverentially sensitive to the action of the Holy Spirit as the authoritative teaching of the Society. "The spirit of the Lord is not guided by leading strings," we have heard one of the early Generals declaring.[4] "To enlighten souls and to attach them closely to Himself He has innumerable ways; hence no brake or fixed limits." Hence the idea of a special vocation of particular souls is explicitly recognised; much more explicitly than in religious Orders where the day is more filled with pentiential or liturgical duties and the rule is regarded more as a maximal common measure than as a necessary minimum of corporate cohesion. A director, Alvarez de Paz[5] tells us, "will sometimes find persons called to an extraordinary mode of life and to great afflictions of the body, who through grace can do much above nature and common men. These we should esteem and not fetter with common rules, but rather loosen the reins for them to follow God's call and leave them in their vocation." The case of Fr. Doyle is quite a usual occurrence in the Society, though

[4] Page 220 above.

[5] *De perfecta contemplatione:* Opera, Paris 1876, vi. 410. On the director's duty to respect the liberty of the individual soul see above p. 148.

naturally the details rarely find their way into a printed biography. "Fr. Doyle is not the last of his line," writes a distinguished Jesuit theologian in a private letter. "I know one whose life is very like his and another of great austerity and prayer. Those over them simply watch as far as they can to see that things do not go too far, but do not interfere. Such knowledge comes to one only by accident, but there it is."

In the intimate writings, which formed the basis of our account of Fr. Doyle's inner life, there are naturally few references to external direction. But those that do occur indicate clearly that he always submitted his plans and penances to a confessor.[6] We also know that for several years he used to go to confession to Fr. Matthew Russell, whose holiness he esteemed and with whom he liked to have spiritual talks. Once after confession Fr. Russell turned to Fr. Doyle and said, "You will go far, my child." When asked what he meant, he merely repeated, "You will go far." We may certainly conclude that Fr. Russell knew many of the secrets of his penitent. Later on, Fr. Doyle was instructed by the Provincial to submit his penances and mortifications to a certain Father. Much to Fr. Doyle's surprise, for he was expecting a drastic curtailment, this Father approved of his practices with some slight modifications and told him to follow the inspirations of the Holy Spirit who was leading him. These indications will serve to show that, while directing and guiding the souls of others, Fr. Doyle himself submitted to that divine yet human scheme whereby men are made their brothers' keepers and each can find an *alter Christus*. Not only did he seek the approval and advice of superiors and confessors, but on more than one occasion he consulted expert directors and masters of the spiritual life.[7] He thus secured that his inner life was in perfect unison

[6] See for example p. 128, 166 ff, concerning his proposed vow. Also we find the following entry in his diary: "Penances allowed, 2nd July, 1914. (1) Discipline fifteen strokes once a day; (2) arm-chain till dinner; (3) waist-chain or hair-cloth an hour daily; (4) rise for moment at night; (5) sleep on boards occasionally; (6) little butter at breakfast; (7) none at lunch; (8) no sweets, etc., at meals; (9) Holy Hour weekly. Revoked in November, 1914."

[7] During his visit to the Continent in 1912 (see p. 110 ff., Fr. Doyle took the opportunity of consulting Père Petit, S.J., and the Abbé S. Legueu, the director of Soeur Gertrude-Marie and editor of her autobiography (*Une mystique de nos jours*, 1910).

with that unceasing harmony of holiness which through the ages has been one of the marks of the true Church.

(2.) DIRECTOR OF OTHERS

Although Fr. Doyle laboured energetically and fruitfully as a missioner, his real gift and taste lay rather in his work as director of souls. He preferred dealing directly and personally with the individual to appealing to crowds, intensive culture of a few chosen souls rather than slight impersonal influence on many. He shrank, too, from the pain of probing into the ulcers of humanity. "The consolation of absolving sinners," he says in one of his letters (1913), "does not lessen the pain of hearing all day a litany of awful sins and outrages against the good and patient God. . . . You have guessed rightly the longing of my heart, namely, to help others to realise the words of Scripture, 'He that is holy, let him be sanctified still.'" (*Apoc.* 22. 11.) On the other hand, his preference for work among chosen souls was absolutely removed from anything remotely approaching snobbery; his valuation was purely spiritual. He once referred to a ladies' retreat which he had to give, as "a job I do not relish—it is too much of a social affair and not earnest work." He always insisted on "the real thing" in holiness, the genuine article branded with the cross; he had no patience with amateurish piety or devotional flippancy. Even by natural character he detested doing things by halves; as he said himself, he was "a whole-hogger." At the outset of his ministry [8] he perhaps expected too much from weak human nature, but he soon acquired the art of gentle leading and gradual guidance. Not that he avoided all mistakes—only the

[8] Compare Père Ginhac: "In the beginning he did not make sufficient allowance for the frailty of human nature in his desire to advance souls to the very highest perfection. . . . Later on he became as large-hearted and indulgent in his direction as he was formerly inclined to be rigid. . . . Towards the end of his life [he lived to over 70], gentleness became his chief characteristic."—*A Man After God's Own Heart*, p. 63. "Fr. Ginhac at this period of his life was not quite enough on his guard against the impulses inspired in generous souls by their first fervour. . . . Later on, taught by experience, he restrained these immoderate desires for corporal mortification."—*Ibid.*, p. 101.

negative critic does that. But he went on his way, every day drawing souls closer to Christ, advocating without compromise what he knew to be Christ's ideal, modifying what he believed to be merely its outer or temporary expression, accepting as inevitable the criticism of those who prefer things as they are and deprecate the better on the plea of letting well alone.

That he was wonderfully successful as a director was shown by the void which his death created, to which many dozens of letters bear touching testimony. To this success many qualities contributed. In the first place he was unaffectedly and unobtrusively polite; a quality which, just because it is not necessarily associated with holiness, must not be undervalued. "Fr. Doyle," a nun declared with emphasis, "always treats one as a lady." Grace of manner, allied with thoughtfulness, always creates a favourable prepossession. Furthermore, Fr. Doyle was obviously painstaking and unselfish, he never shrank from trouble when the issue was the good of even a single soul, he never grumbled or complained of inroads made on his time and temper.[9] In addition to all this, he had "a way with him," a natural attractiveness and spontaneity, an infectious gaiety. He had nothing of prudery or stiffness about him, no depressingly impersonal smile or manner, no angularities or excrescences.[10] His emotions did not seem to move on merely celestial hinges, nor did his movements appear to be regulated

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[9] There are in his diary two entries bearing on this. "I felt greatly annoyed to-day because I was kept hearing confessions for nearly five hours without lunch, and also on arriving at X because asked to hear more confessions. . . . I see now that it was Jesus did it all and that in future I must let nothing ruffle me since these things come straight from His hand." (26th July, 1914.) "I was very much annoyed at Y about extra work and confessions during the retreat. Our Lord reproached me for this, making me see more clearly that all this came from His hand and not from 'the thoughtlessness of others' as I told myself. I told several people about what I suffered and my pains, etc., which Jesus wanted me to keep to myself." (1st September, 1915.) Even holy people can at times be thoughtless and provoking; on such occasions Fr. Doyle was clearly not helped by any natural obtusity or placidity.

[10] Père Ginhac was thus criticised by one of his novices: "Every one of his movements is studied. If he speaks affectionately, if he smiles or is amiable, one can see that it is all regulated by the will and that he acts thus because God wishes it so. One would prefer something a little more spontaneous, something a little more from the heart."—*A Man After God's Own Heart*, p. 96.

by spiritual clockwork. Those whom he helped felt that he had a real personal interest in them, he did not regard them as so much undifferentiated soul-stuff. Moreover, in his retreat-talks or private conversations he did not use stilted language or conventional phraseology, he spoke with homely directness. Thus he would say: "There are three D's which you ought to avoid—the Doctor, the Devil, and the Dumps. You can cheat the doctor and run from the devil, but the dumps are the *divil!*" [11] He did not think that holiness lost by being conjoined with a sense of humour. Nor did he neglect any available helps to imagination, memory or sentiment. In giving a retreat to children and even adults he sometimes gave one of the daily instructions with the aid of lantern-slides, a method of vivid presentation which always made a deep impression.[12] He also had recourse to what may be termed little dodges or stratagems. For example, one of his favourite aspirations was "Omnipotent God make me a saint." This he had printed on small pink leaflets which, parodying a well-known advertisement, he called (Father William's) "pink pills for pale saints" or, as he once put it, "intended to make pale souls ruddy with the love of God." He once sent a box of these to a convent with the following "directions for use": "To be taken frequently during the day, and occasionally at night, as directed by the physician; when the disease is deeply rooted and of long standing, increase the dose to every quarter of an hour; result infallible, will either cure or kill!" This may seem a rather elaborate joke, especially when put in cold print. But there are many to whom the presentation of a "pink pill" was the first not easily forgotten introduction to the use of aspirations. Besides, this kindly humour was simply natural to the man and brought an element of humanness into relations too often regarded as formal or dismal.

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[11] Other examples of his homely language are: "Please send me 6/8 for this advice." "Since you mean to be a saint, why not 'buck up' and be a big one?" "Keep smiling; it is a grand thing to cultivate a smile. Keep the corners of your mouth up, especially if you are in for an attack of the dumps."

[12] He had projected a meditation book, the chief innovation in which was to be that each meditation was accompanied by a picture representing the scene or "composition of place."

Beyond and behind all these qualities and activities there was something which can only be called personal influence. It was not any gifts of mind and heart, nor was it just facility of expression, nor yet quick intuitive sympathy; it was all this and more. There was about Fr. Doyle as director that intangible indefinable thing which we term personality. It was not so much the words that moved people as the man behind the words, not so much what he said as what he was. Not that he ever spoke of himself or his own spiritual life.[13] One might perhaps guess at details of prayer and mortification. But that was not uppermost in one's mind when one came into real contact with him; one thought, not of details, but of the whole man. One seemed to feel the radiance of the love with which he was afire as distinctly as if it were a physical rise of temperature. He was so transparently earnest, the words came, as it were, charged with something more than meaning. To those who knew Fr. Doyle by casual acquaintanceship, all this may sound exaggerated. But it is a faithful description of the impression which he made on those who sought from him guidance and help. And it enables us to realise that in such spiritual relationship there is something more than moral or ascetic theology, more than eloquence or elocution. Does not the secret lie in our Lord's own criterion of fruitfulness? "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." (*S. John* 12. 24.) Or, to change the simile but not the reality: "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me." (*S. John* 15. 4.) [14]

Fr. Doyle did not confine himself to personal interviews, he kept up a heavy correspondence. How he managed it, in spite

[13] Compare this, written to a nun: "I fear you have let fall from time to time little hints about God's graces to you, which people have taken in joke. You must be careful to hide the King's secret from all."

[14] Here is a quotation from a letter to Fr. Doyle (1916) to which many similar testimonies could be added: "Everyone I met seemed to hold me back instead of helping me forward, but you brought new hope [of being a saint] into my life. I have done more acts of self-conquest in the past eight months than in all the rest of the twenty years I have been in religion."

of his other multitudinous activities, is something of a mystery. It was to the end a heavy strain, absorbing much time and energy. Often he found it a wearisome burden and felt inclined to abandon what after reflection he always came again to consider a real apostolate. "When a man takes the pledge for life," he once wrote, "he generally asks for just one more drink. I have made a resolution this year not to grumble about letters, so I am entitled to have one last growl. The growl is only an apology for not answering your welcome letter sooner. But it reached me with twenty-four others, and ten came by the next post! No matter, since He wills it; but you will understand why at times I neglect you." [15] "Ask Jesus," he says to another correspondent, "to help me with all the letters I have to write. A big temptation came to me some time back that this letter-writing was a huge waste of time and no good was done. I could not help feeling that the answer came from our Blessed Lord Himself in the following extract: 'It may console you to know that your letter has been the means of saving me from at least one hundred mortal sins since. When these fierce temptations come upon me, I take it out and read it over, and somehow it helps me to fight the devil and say, 'No, I will not offend God again.' That has given me fresh courage." Hence Fr. Doyle threw himself into a task which was far from congenial to him and which candid critics did not hesitate to describe as a wasteful delusion. He never shirked any toil or trouble once he became convinced that it was helping the interests of his Master. "Don't be afraid of writing if I can help you," he said to a diffident religious. "But if you want to make me angry, apologise for 'giving me trouble'! How could that be called trouble which helps you

[15] "I have resolved," he writes during his retreat (Sept. 1913), "to look upon all letters as coming to me from God and not to complain at being obliged to answer them." One letter ends thus: "God love you! there are rows of people waiting for confession, and I shall be eaten." (April, 1912.) Compare what Mgr. Baudrillart says of Mgr. d'Hulst: "Correspondence certainly added greatly to the overloading of his life; he dreaded the postman's knock."—*The Way of the Heart: Letters of Direction*, Eng. trans. 1913, p. viii. Lacordaire had a very heavy correspondence.—*Inner Life* by Chocarne, Eng. trans. 1867, p. 385. Also Père de la Colombière—his *Lettres Spirituelles* (Grenoble, 1902) contain 148 letters.

to love our dearest Lord even one tiny scrap more?" To his zealous heart the question seemed unanswerable.

His voluminous correspondence was concerned exclusively with spiritual matters.[16] For mere chat or gossip he had neither time nor inclination. "Now for a scolding!" he wrote to a well-meaning news-sender. "A good deal of your last letter consisted of 'news.' I know you meant kindly, but I only want to hear about your soul and your progress in perfection, or at least such things as bear directly on the interests of God." His letters consist, therefore, practically altogether of personal advice and spiritual direction. All this was, it is hardly necessary to say, written for particular individuals in known circumstances, and was not intended to form a general treatise on the spiritual life. One cannot always generalise individual spiritual guidance, any more than one can indiscriminately apply a doctor's prescription. But in so far as general principles are advocated, it seems useful to collect some typical passages from letters written by Fr. Doyle, especially to nuns. Some such excerpts have been already given, particularly in the account of his own inner life. A further selection, roughly classified under convenient heads, will enable us to appreciate more accurately the main outlines of his spiritual direction. This arrangement has the advantage of letting Fr. Doyle speak for himself. It is, of course, obvious that a succession of extracts from letters to different correspondents will necessarily include some repetitions, and cannot in any sense be regarded as a compact or unified treatment. At least they will form a little anthology of counsels and thoughts, among which the reader can pick and choose whatever seems appropriate or true.[17]

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[16] In writing his letters he relied greatly on prayer and inspiration. Here are some typical sentences. "I want you to look upon what I have said as coming from Him, for He has had more to do with the writing of this letter than I had." "Why should I write all this? I did not intend doing so when I sat down to answer your letter. But I suppose He wishes it, for I asked Him as usual what I should say to you." "I have just come from the chapel where we have had a long 'chat,' so you must take what I write as coming from Him."

[17] As far as possible the date is affixed to each. The few extracts dated 1905 are from the Notes referred to on p. 35 ff.

(3.) DISCOURAGEMENT

To judge by the frequency with which Fr. Doyle's letters deal with it, discouragement must be the besetting sin of those who are striving towards holiness. Doubtless sometimes it shows a secret pride and over-reliance on our own unaided efforts; we are quite surprised and hurt that we did not do better; we are irritated by the discovery of our faults, especially if others share that discovery. Discouragement such as this is not dissipated by harsh sincerity nor excised by drastic spiritual surgery; it must be converted into humble childlike trustfulness in Christ who knows our weakness and our difficulties, who sees them from *our* side and not as human critics do. Another form of discouragement lies in that natural human shrinking from struggle and suffering, such as our Lord Himself felt in Gethsemane. He, who chose three companions to be near Him and prayed for the passing of the bitter chalice, knows well what it is to be sorrowful, sad and fearful. Surely He does not begrudge human counsel and companionship to those who begin to fear and to be heavy. "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak." (*S. Mark* 14. 38.) Hence it is that a discerning and sympathetic director can do so much for one who is faithful, but discouraged, acting as "an angel from heaven strengthening him." (*S. Luke* 22. 43.) The pith of Fr. Doyle's advice can be put in these two short sentences of his: "When you commit a fault which humbles you and for which you are really sorry, it is a gain instead of a loss." "Recognize God's graces to you, and instead of thinking of yourself and your faults, try to do all you can for God and love Him more." Here are some further excerpts from his letters:

(A). "There is one fault in religions which should not be forgiven either in this world or in the world to come, and that is *discouragement;* for it means we are playing the devil's game for him—his pet walking stick, someone has called it. Thank God, we have not to judge ourselves, for, as St. Igna-

tius wisely remarks, no one is a judge in his own case. Let me judge you, my child, as I honestly think God judges you. My verdict must be that you have grown immensely in holiness during the past few years. To begin with, every particle of merit—and there must be millions of them since you first entered religion—is waiting for you in heaven, for no amount of infidelity or venial sin can ever diminish that by one iota. Then, in spite of your sufferings and weak health, you have worked on and struggled on from day to day—a life which must have pleased God immensely. Don't lose heart, my dear child, the darkness you feel is not a sign of God's displeasure, for every saint has gone through it. You are 'minting money' every instant you live, you are helping to save soul after soul each hour you suffer. So you should say with St. Paul (2 *Cor.* 7. 4): 'I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation.' " (July, 1913.)

(B). "You seem to have been going through a harder time than usual lately, and this evidently has come as a surprise to you. But is it not the best of signs that all is well, that God has accepted your generous offer to bear all He wishes to send you, and that the devil is furious and alarmed at the progress you have made in perfection and mad at the harm you have done to his evil cause? The storm has come upon you, and you, foolish child as you always were, have thought all is lost because you have bent a little like the reed before the wind. No, the want of courage, firmness and generosity will only serve to tumble and throw you the more confidently into the strengthening arms of our dear Lord, since it makes you see that without Him you can do nothing.

"God always seems to permit this to happen even to His saints. I read recently in the life of a holy soul who had promised to give our Lord all: "Three times to-day I *deliberately* avoided a humiliation and a little act of self-denial." Hurrah, boys! I say; if the saints act like that, there is some hope for you and me. If there has been any falling off in your generous resolution, go back humbly to the feet of Jesus now and

take up bravely the cross which means so much for His glory and your happiness." (December, 1912.)

(C). "In spite of all our efforts, we fall into faults from time to time. God permits this for two reasons: (1) to keep the soul humble and to make it realise its utter powerlessness when left alone without His fostering hand, and (2) because the act of sorrow after the fault not only washes it completely away, but immensely increases our merit, and being an act of humility bringing us really heartbroken to His feet, delights Him beyond measure." (April, 1913.)

(D). "Our Lord is displeased only when He sees no attempt made to get rid of imperfections which, when deliberate, clog the soul and chain it to the earth. But He often purposely does not give the victory over them in order to increase our opportunities of meriting. Make an act of humility and sorrow after failure, and then never a thought more about it.

"He sees what a 'tiny little child' you are, and how useless even your greatest efforts are to accomplish the gigantic work of making a saint. But this longing, this stretching out of baby hands for His love, pleases Him beyond measure; and one day He will stoop down and catch you up with infinite tenderness in His divine arms and raise you to heights of sanctity you little dream of now." (May, 1913.)

(E). "You need not be uneasy to see in your soul apparent contradictions; an ardent desire to love God and to suffer for Him, and then when the opportunity comes, a shrinking from pain, and even a refusal to bear it. Fortunately we are dealing with our Lord who can read the heart and who knows our protestations of love are sincere and genuine, with One, too, who knows the weakness of our human nature and who does not expect much from us. He does not forget His own human weakness on earth. 'With desire have I desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer,' He said showing His longing for His Passion. And then an hour after He seems to take

His offering back: 'Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me.' The very longing to love Him and bear much for His sake is dear to our Lord, even if our courage fails when tested." (June, 1913.)

(F). "Our dear Lord is certainly testing the extent of your love for Him before He takes you to Himself. But should not that make you rejoice, my dear child, since the harder and sharper the fight, the closer will be your union with Him in heaven? I have just one fault to blame you for: you have always kept your eyes fixed on your faults—I do not deny there are plenty!—and have never helped yourself by thinking on what you have done and suffered for His dear sake. If you have forgotten all this, He has not; and when you meet Him, the gratitude of His loving Heart will hide the imperfections and faults of former years. Be brave and generous to the end, my dear child, and do not take back what He asks you to give, though He knew well what it would cost you." (August, 1912.)

(G). "I think there is no harder trial in the spiritual life than the one you speak of. One feels so weary of it all, fighting and struggling against things which seem so small and mean, and where there is apparently so little merit to be gained, and then comes the longing to throw it all up and be content with just doing the bare necessary to save one's soul. You must have great patience with *yourself*, my dear child, and not expect to get into a region of perfect peace where there would be no trials or worries or fighting against self—even the saints did not enjoy that calm. Remember, God sees the intention, which in your case is generous and unreserved. He is quite pleased with that, and only smiles when He sees us failing in our resolve and determination to be perfect. To console you, here is the confession of the great S. Teresa (*Life* 30. 15): 'The devil sends me so offensive a spirit of bad temper that at times I think I could eat people up.' She was canonised, so there is some hope of salvation for us yet." (March, 1912.)

(H). "Are you not foolish in wishing to be free from these attacks of impatience, etc.? I know how violent they can be, since they sweep down on me at all hours without any provocation. You forget the many victories they furnish you with, the hours perhaps of hard fighting, and only fix your eyes on the little tiny word of anger, or the small fault, which is gone with one 'Jesus forgive me.'" (April, 1912.)

(I). "I fear you are allowing the devil to score off you by getting so much upset over these bothersome, but harmless, temptations. You must let our Lord sanctify you in His own way. Were we to pick our own trials and modes of sanctification, we should soon make a mess of things. The net result of your temptations is a deeper humility, a sense of your own weakness and wretchedness, and is not this all gain? 'My brethren, count it all joy, when you shall fall into divers temptations,' says St. James (1. 2). All I ask you to do is to try to crush down the first movements of temptation, which perhaps can best be done by praying that others may be more favoured or esteemed than you. There is a danger you may not suspect in thinking and grieving too much over temptation and faults. First of all there is oftentimes a secret pride hidden in our grief and anger with ourselves for not being as perfect as we thought or as others thought. Then this worrying over what cannot well be avoided distracts the soul from God. After all what God wants from you, my child, is love, and nothing should distract you from the grand work of love-giving. Hence, when you fail, treat our Blessed Lord like a loving little child, tell Him you are sorry, kiss His feet as a token of your regret, and then forget all about your naughtiness."

(J). "I hope by the time you receive this you will have realised how foolish it is of you to bother about *anything*—no matter what it may be—in your past confessions. Generously make the sacrifice of never thinking or speaking of them again. You may do so with an easy conscience when you act under

obedience. God wants to have your soul in a state of perfect peace and calm, for only then will He be able to fill it with His love and dwell there undisturbed." (May, 1912.)

(K). "Desolation is not a punishment for past infidelity, but a special grace reserved for the few. The only danger comes from the temptation of the devil, that God has abandoned you and that it would be better to chuck it all up. He will beat you in the fight at times, making you weary of this never-ending war against self and forcing you to yield to nature. But no harm is done provided you *start again.*"

(L). "St. Vincent de Paul used to say: 'One of the most certain marks that God has great designs upon a soul is when He sends desolation upon desolation, suffering upon suffering.' [18] Do you doubt for a moment that God has not great designs upon your soul? The clear and consoling proof is in the terrible trial you are going through. Do not let the assaults of the enemy disturb you. He is showing his hand by this last storm and his fierce fury that you did not yield in the direction that he wanted. Treat his suggestions with silent contempt, simply lifting your heart to God now and again, but above all not trying to *drive* these thoughts away, nor being fearful of giving any consent, even though you may seem to do so under the violence of the attack. Keep your will firm, and do not trouble about feelings and desires.

"I do not think your 'false humility' is pleasing to God, though I do not suggest for a moment that you are putting it on. Drop self and all thought of reparation out of your life, and work now only for Him and the salvation of souls. If an aspiration, on the authority of the B. Curé d' Ars, often saved a soul, what must you not do each day you suffer so bravely! This thought certainly will help you and make the pain almost nothing, and will add to its merit, since the motive for bearing it will be all the higher." (1913.)

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[18] "When God afflicts a soul with desolation on desolation and trouble on trouble, it is proof that he has great designs upon her." *Life of S. Vincent de Paul with Spiritual Maxims,* by a Catholic Priest, Dublin (no date), p. 84. Cf. Ansart *Esprit de St. Vincent de Paul,* Tournai 1852, p. 291.

(M). "I noticed a tone of despondency in your letter, a yielding to that commonest of all the evil suggestions of the tempter, *Cui bono?* What is the use of all this struggling without any result, and so much prayer followed by no apparent improvement? It is a clever temptation, and a successful one with most souls, resulting in the giving up of the very things which are slowly but surely making them saints. If only one could grasp this fact: Every tiny thing (aspiration, self-denial, etc.,) makes us holier than we were. Just think of the thousand of tiny things done each day for God, *e.g.* each step we take; all is done for Him, every one of them has added to our merit, making us more pleasing in His sight, and each moment holier. No one can see this gradual spiritual growth, though sometimes when we have gained a big victory, such as the secret one you won recently over yourself, we wonder where the strength came from to do it. I have watched your steady progress in perfection with the greatest joy and gratitude for your generosity, and so I want to warn you not to listen to such a suggestion that your efforts have been in vain. Your biggest fault at present, my child, is that you have not yet completely bent your will to God's designs. I think it would please Him immensely to have no wishes of our own, apart from holy ones, so that He could bend and twist and fashion us just as He pleases, knowing well that we will not even murmur. Remember this does not mean that our *feelings* will die also." (January, 1916.)

(N). "Surely, my child, you are not surprised to find that you have broken your resolution, or rather, that the devil has gained a victory over you. I am convinced from a pretty big experience that perfection, that is sanctity, is only to be won by repeated *failures*. If you rise again after a fall, sorry for the pain given our Lord, humbled by it, since you see better your real weakness, and determined to make another start, far more is gained than if you had gone on without a stumble. Besides, to expect to keep any resolution, till repeated acts have made it solid in the soul, is like one expecting to learn skating, for example, without ever falling. The more falls, the better

(that is if you do not mind bumps), for every fall means that we have begun again, have made another effort and so have made progress. I mention this because I know that you—like myself [19]—are given to discouragement and tempted to give up *all* when failure comes." (July, 1915.)

(O). "You seem to be suffering, my dear child, from a very common religious malady—discouragement and want of patience with yourself, looking for and expecting to *see* great results from your efforts to become holier. You forget what a clog the body is on the soul, and how in spite of the most generous intentions and determination, it prevents us, time after time, from carrying out our plans. You remember St. Paul's bitter complaint that the good he wished to do he did not: 'I am delighted with the law of God, but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin.' This is the experience of all who are striving to serve God well. They cannot always do what they would like and what they know He asks of them, but in the end the grace of God—S. Paul's remedy—will bring the victory, if only we persevere. Another consolation is that our Lord is often as much pleased (more, S. Teresa says) by our good intentions and desires than by their execution. The good desire, the longing and wish to be perfect, is strong in you, and as long as that remains you need never fear displeasing God. Besides, you have a tremendous lever of sanctification in the power of love that enables us to do things, especially what costs us an effort, for our Lord's dear sake. Mind, this does not mean feeling, sensible affection, but simply a dry act

[19] Compare this entry in his diary (27th June, 1915) made just a month previously: "I am writing in great desolation and sadness, tempted even to abandon my vocation and plunge headlong into sin. All this is the result of having given in to myself, broken my resolutions and indulged myself in every way. Oh, my God, what am I to do? I made a fresh start with great generosity and determination, and in three days was worse than ever I see my deadly enemy is my weak character and inconstant will, which I have made worse by years of yielding to it. My Jesus, I am humbled and crushed. Is there any use trying more? Every effort means a new failure and disappointment to You; and still I feel You urging me on to nobler things, to begin again." The very exaggeration of the language is a measure of the despondency.

of the will, intending to make the sacrifice or action an act of pure love. 'My God, I do this for the love of You, and for no one else in the world would I do it.' Try this in easy things, and occasionally make a dive at a really big sacrifice which costs, for love means sacrifice, and sacrifice leads infallibly to love." (October, 1913.)

(P). "Will it be any help to you to learn that I know many who suffer as you do? Hence I can perfectly understand what you are going through; the disgust for everything spiritual, the almost hatred of God, and the mad longing almost to leave it all behind and run away. However, we know that such a step would not end the trouble or bring relief in any form, on the contrary, that would simply mean playing into the devil's hands and could only lead to one thing in the end. We know also that these trials come from God and that if one is only patient, they will pass. Hence, my dear child, you must set your teeth and hold on; spiritual life, remember, is a warfare and you will surely not run away when the real attack comes, but rather boldly face the enemy." (August, 1915.)

(Q). "Surely you are not right in trying to keep our Lord away from you, or in thinking that He looks upon you with displeasure. When sin in the past is repented for, the poor soul who once strayed from Him has a strange attraction for His gentle Heart. You pain Him intensely if you think He does not love you now, nor wish for your affection. Give Him all you can, warmly and naturally, like a little child, and rest assured that the one longing of His Heart is to see you advance rapidly in holiness and perfection. You must try and cultivate great confidence and trust in our dear Lord's love and mercy, driving far from you sadness and regret of all kinds. Give it no quarter, it is all from the devil and so most harmful." (August, 1913.)

(R). "I hope every single one of you will have broken every resolution you made in the retreat before the end of the week, and if not then at least in a fortnight. It will do you

good and humble you provided you get up and begin again and do not flop down and lie there on the broad of your back, saying 'It's no use, it's all over.' Not a bit of it, it's not all over, it's only beginning. So up with you and start again. Remember each time you fall that you are not back where you were before but are starting again from where you fell." (At a retreat to nuns.)

(S). "As long as the desire of pleasing God remains in your heart and there is a steady constant effort towards perfection, you need never be uneasy about your state of soul. Everything else, small imperfections and even deliberate faults, coldness in prayer, are mere details in a life which is very pleasing to God. Do not expect to *see* much progress, but rest assured that the advance is certain and steady. Get more prayer into your life, if you can." (May, 1916.)

(T). "You must not mind these little slips—for they are nothing else—but look up at Him who knows and understands *everything,* and simply say, 'I *do* trust You.' Depend more on God. *You* cannot become holy, *you* cannot overcome your faults; but Jesus can give you help, strength and courage, and bring you at length to a high degree of perfection.

"You are not trusting Him enough. Do stop worrying and leave this whole matter in His hands. This is only a trick of the devil to disturb your peace of soul; and without peace there can be no prayer, no union with God, no work done purely for Him. Put this into mortification of your thoughts and work away at conquering it." (December, 1914.)

(U). "I am quite convinced our Blessed Lord is well pleased with you and will become more so if you walk bravely along the path He has chosen for you in His love, the path of dryness and little sensible consolation. You may find it hard to believe me when I say you must be very dear to Him and very pleasing in His sight, since He has marked you out for this trial. Mind, it is not a punishment for past infidelity but a special grace reserved for the few. The only danger comes

from the temptation of the devil, that God has abandoned you, and it would be better to chuck it all up. He will beat you in the fight at times, making you weary of this never-ending war against self and forcing you to yield to nature. But no harm is done provided you *start again.*"

(V). "Are you weary of the fight already and willing to give in to the enemy? Never mind, come back, begin again, Jesus wants you. There are millions of pagans to be saved, a hundred thousand dying sinners every day to be rescued. For shame, to sit down and cry over your own self and troubles while so many others need your aid. Ask your holy patron to help you. Don't lose heart. I think I can understand better than many what you suffer. I am not angry with you—why should I be when I know how sorely you are tempted and the rage of the devil against you? But I certainly shall be angry if you play the coward and admit that you are beaten." (June, 1913.)

(W). "These natural repugnances will not take away from the merit of the act, rather they seem to add to its merit, for our Blessed Lord permits and thereby sanctifies repugnances. We can never sufficiently thank Him for so completely showing us in the Garden that He was a man by praying to escape the storm. God allows us to beg of Him to lessen or withdraw our trial, provided that beneath all there be 'Thy will be done.'"

(X). "A frequent ejaculation of the saints must have been, I think: Failed again, Lord, I'll begin again!"

(4.) UNION AND ABANDONMENT

With equal soundness of spirituality and accuracy of insight, Fr. Doyle counselled the elimination of anxieties, distractions and worries, not so much by direct counter-attack and detailed defence as by the energizing power of a great ideal. Just as a magnet attracts and orientates a

confused mass of iron filings, marshalling and linking them harmoniously, so an all-embracing ideal will influence and direct all our powers and activities. See God everywhere, he said in effect; He is behind every event, even what men miscall accidents; desolation is but the shade of His hand outstretched caressingly; gladness is the sunshine of His presence. Above all, He is within our souls, often sacramentally, always by His immanent indwelling; he thinks with us, He shares our very consciousness as no other being can. With the growing realization of this union with God within us and abandonment to God's acting on us from without, life will become easier and happier; all our piece-meal striving and individual troubles will gradually coalesce into one life-long continuous act of conformity to God's will. "Abandon yourself completely into the hands of God and take directly from Him every event of life, agreeable or disagreeable; only then can God make you really holy." "Holiness," he wrote elsewhere, "is really nothing more than perfect conformity to God's will." "This worrying over what cannot well be avoided," he said in a letter already cited, "distracts the soul from God; after all, what God wants from you is love, and nothing should distract you from the grand work of love-giving." Distractions are to be conquered by one overmastering attraction; a strong man will be conquered and dispossessed only if a stronger than he come upon him. Thus, as Fr. Doyle advocated it, this ideal of conformity consisted in no mere negative quiescence or patient resignation; [20] it was a positive active amalgamation of the human will with God's, culminating logically in that perfect act of immolation which was the keynote of his own holiness. All this, be it noted, was no mere scheme of destructive will-crushing or punitive repression, it was designed as a constructive expansion of the will, a joyous chivalrous uplifting of the soul.[21] The heart

[20] "This is not to be a kind of resigned, or perhaps rebellious, conformity, but a generous cheerful (though not felt) embracing of what He wills."—October, 1916.)

[21] Fr. Doyle advocated as an important part of this conformity that docility to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit, which was so conspicuous in his own life.

was not to be left swept and garnished, ready for seven other spirits more wicked than the unclean spirit already driven out. True abandonment was to be consummated only by union.[22] "He that loveth Me shall be loved of my Father; and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him. . . . And We will come to him and will make Our abode with him." (*S. John* 14. 21.)

(A). "I want you to make greater effort to see the hand of God in *everything* that happens, and then to force or train yourself to rejoice in His holy will. For example, you want a fine day for some reason and it turns out wet. Don't say, 'Oh, hang it!' but give our Lord a loving smile and say: 'Thank You, my God, for this disappointment.' This will help you to keep down impatience, irritability, etc., when people annoy you. Then when some hard trial is past, look back on it, see how you ought to have taken it, and resolve to act that way in future." (March, 1915.)

(B). "Try to draw closer each day the bonds of union with Him, thinking often of His dwelling within your soul, and so making your heart beat in union with His; that is, seeking and wishing for only His adorable will in all things, even the smallest. This will conquer all worries, for nothing which comes from the loving hand of God can ever be a worry to us." (March, 1913.)

(C). "Your difficulty is merely God's plan for your sanctification. 'My child, let Me do with you what I will.' This is hard to submit to, especially when our Lord hides Himself in the background and uses other instruments to do His work on us. Never mind, my dear child, you are making undoubted progress. Jesus may hide it from your eyes, but He does not hide it from mine. I do not trouble

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[22] "The state of divine union consists in the total transformation of the will into the will of God, so that every movement of the will shall be always the movement of the will of God only."—S. John of the Cross, *Ascent of Mount Carmel* i. 11, 3. So Teresa. *Foundations* v. 10.

in the least about your little faults and failings which will vanish as you become more perfect and grow more in the love of what is hard to nature. For your consolation remember that everyone I have ever met found the struggle for perfection hard because most of the work is done in the dark. It is a question of faith and courage, going along bravely day after day, gathering up a sacrifice here and there, and although many are let slip, every one we lay at the feet of our Lord means so much solid progress."

(D). "May our dear Lord help you to bear the cross His love has sent you. Try to keep this one thought before you all through your trial: This is God's doing. Hence do not indulge in useless regrets about want of care, etc. Even if there was negligence, God permitted it to give you this golden chance of being brave and generous under the cross. What has happened will bring you much grace and even happiness, if you take it in the right way. 'Let Him act,' must be your motto. Jesus will bring all things right in the end. The more I get to know God, the more inclined I feel to let Him work out things in His own way and time, and to go on peacefully, not troubling about anything. This cross is a sign of God's love for you, and the surest way of increasing your love for Him. Though you indeed try to take courageously the crosses God sends you, still there seems to be a want of that complete submission to God's wishes that He looks for and longs for in every detail of your life. Endeavour still more to give Him the desire of His Heart."

(E). "I have been praying earnestly to know what our Lord wants from you during this year, and if I mistake not, this is His message to you. He wants a very close union with Him which you will try to effect in this way. Each morning at Holy Communion invite Jesus, with all the love and fervour you can, to enter into your heart and dwell there during the day as in a tabernacle, making of your heart a living tabernacle which will be very dear to Him. . . . This union will be impossible without complete abandon-

ment to God's pleasure in all the little worries of your life. Do whatever you think is most for His glory . . . and then calmly watch Him upset all and apparently bless your efforts with failure, and even sins on the part of others. I have long had the feeling that your over-anxiety to keep things right or prevent uncharitableness which has caused you a good deal of worry, is not pleasing to God and prevents Him from drawing you closer in His love. *Non in commotione Dominus.*[23] Labour, then, with might and main to keep your soul in peace, put an unbounded trust in His loving goodness. If you live in Jesus and Jesus in you, striving to make each little action, each morsel of food, every word of the Office, etc., an act of love to be laid at His feet as dwelling in your heart, you will certainly please Him immensely and fly to perfection." (January, 1912.)

(F). "This morning during Mass I felt strongly that Jesus was pained that you do not trust Him absolutely, that is, trust Him in every detail of your life. You are wanting in that childlike confidence He desires so much from you, the taking lovingly and trustfully from His hands all that He sends you, not even wishing things to have happened otherwise. He wants you to possess your soul in peace in the midst of the many troubles, cares and difficulties of your work, looking upon everything as arranged by Him, and hence something to welcome joyfully. Jesus will not dwell in your soul as He wishes unless you are at peace. This is the first step towards that union which you desire so much—but not so much as He does. Don't keep Him waiting, my child, but by earnest and constant efforts empty your heart of every care that He may abide with you for ever." (May, 1913.)

(G). "We do not mind what God does with us so long as it more or less fits in with our own wishes, but when His will clashes with ours, we begin to see the difficulty of the prayer, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.' All the same I think we can never expect really to please God till we become

[23] "The Lord is not in the earthquake."—III. *Kings* 19, 11.

like wax in His hands, so that He will never have to hesitate before sending a cross or trial no matter how hard." (April, 1913.)

(H). "As regards this union with our Lord, it is really nothing more than a blending of our will with His, in such a way that we wish only what He wishes, and as far as possibly only think of and interest ourselves in those things that are His.

"I would urge you to avoid worry and anxiety which always show that self is still strong and that the human will is not completely dead.

"In the matter of suffering I think you are inclined to confound the act of the will with feeling. You do not really 'draw back' when suffering comes, since you have the will to bear all things for the love of Jesus; but nature shrinks from pain and at times makes our 'will to suffer' give way.

"To-day at Exposition I asked our Lord to let me know what He wished you to correct especially during your retreat. It seems to me, my child, that most of your faults come from a want of perfect abandonment to the will of God. For example, when you get annoyed with people and speak sharply, you lose sight of God's directing hand, which prompted or allowed people to act in this way. God's will is constantly clashing with ours, and unless a soul is perfectly submissive, interior peace is disturbed or lost. True abandonment means crushing out self and welcoming with sweetness and joy all God sends."

(I). "Try to grasp the fact—a very hard thing to do—that in the spiritual life 'feelings' count for nothing, that they are no indication of our real state; generally speaking they are just the opposite. . . . You are perfectly right when you say that the first thing to do is 'to give up your own will.' Why not aim at making God's will alone yours in every detail of life, so that you would never desire or wish for anything except what He willed, and look on every detail as coming from His hand, as it does? Such a one is never 'put

out' by anything—bad weather, unpleasant work, annoying incidents, they are all His doing and His sweet will. Try it, though it means high perfection." (October, 1916.)

(J). "Do nothing without consulting Him in the Tabernacle. But then act fearlessly, if you see it is for His honour and glory, never minding what others may think or say. Above all, 'cast your care upon the Lord and He shall sustain you.' (*Psalm* 54. 23.) Peace and calm in your soul, prayer ever on your lips, and a big love in your heart for Him and His interests, will carry you very far."

(K). "You know well that even the smallest cross and happening of your life is part of our Blessed Lord's plan for your sanctification. It is not easy, I know, to look at things in this light. But one can train the will to look upon the acts of others, even their sinful acts in as much as they concern ourselves, as coming from the hand of God. There is so much real holiness and so very much solid happiness and peace and contentment in this little principle, that I am very anxious you should try and acquire it, so that nothing may really ruffle the peace of your soul. Don't think this is easy, it is not; and you will fail time after time in your efforts, but with perseverance, steady progress will be made." (November, 1914.)

(L). "A quiet hidden life is not possible for you in one way, and yet perfectly so in another—by building a solitude in your heart where you can ever live alone with Jesus, letting the noise and worry of life, cares and anxieties of the world, pass over your head like a storm, which will never ruffle the peace of your soul. You will enjoy perfect calm and peace of soul, the requisite condition for a life of union, by keeping Jesus ever with you as a Friend, and remembering that everything happens by His permission and is in fact His work. Let this principle soak in and it will make you a saint. Apply it to every detail of your life, and you will not be far from what you seek; in fact humiliations, slights,

annoyances, worries will all disappear, since it is not X, but Jesus, who is trying you in this way." (June, 1916.)

(M). "Make this Act of Immolation to-morrow, Good Friday, at three o'clock. If you mean it and try henceforth to live up to its spirit, it will be 'a holocaust in the odour of sweetness,' a perpetual sacrifice of your own will, ever ascending before the throne of God, and will draw down upon you, I am convinced, many great and wonderful graces.

"The practice of this act is simply that you give yourself into the hands of Jesus in the most absolute manner possible, abandoning especially your own will, that He may do with you, at every moment and in every way, as He pleases; you give yourself to Him as *His willing victim* to be immolated to His good pleasure, and should He so please, to be sacrificed and to suffer without complaint or murmur whatsoever He may wish.

"Trials, disappointments, failure, humiliations, suffering of body and soul may crowd upon you, at least from time to time, but if you welcome them all as coming direct from His hand in answer to your generous offering, and as part of the immolation of His willing victim, you will find a sweetness and a delight in these things you never tasted before.

"This is the life I promised to point out to you which, I said, would make you a greater saint than if you were buried in a cloister. For your present life is daily full of opportunities of proving that you wish and are willing to suffer, to be immolated and sacrificed for the love of Jesus, 'the Victim of love' who is ever offered still on our altars. Make the act in a spirit of deep humility, but with immense trust and confidence in the grace of God which will not fail you. May our crucified Jesus take you now, my dear child, and nail you to the cross with Himself." (Holy Thursday, 1913.)

The following is the Act which is here referred to.[24]

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[24] Some of the sentences of this Act of Immolation are taken from Soeur Gertrude-Marie—*Une mystique de nos jours*, p. 145 (abridged Eng. trans., p. 25).

Act of Immolation.

O most sweet Jesus, with all my heart, united to the dispositions of Your holy Mother upon Calvary, through her and with her, I offer myself to You and to the adorable Trinity, upon all the altars of the world, as a most pure oblation, uniting in myself every sacrifice and act of homage.

I offer Your Sacred Wounds and all the Blood You have shed, particularly the sweet Wound of Your Sacred Heart with the blood and water which flowed from It, and the precious tears of Your Mother.

I offer this most holy sacrifice in union with all the souls who love You in Heaven and on earth for all the intentions of Your Divine Heart, and especially as a victim of expiation and impetration on behalf of Your priests and of the souls whom You have consecrated to Yourself.

I offer myself to You to be Your *Victim* in the fullest sense of the word. I deliver to You my body, my soul, my heart, all that I have, that You may dispose of and immolate them according to Your good pleasure. Do with me as You please, without consulting my desires, my repugnances, my wishes.

I offer myself to Your Justice, to Your Sanctity, to Your Love. To Your Justice, to make reparation for my sins and those of all poor sinners. To Your Holiness, for my own sanctification and that of all souls consecrated to You, especially Your priests. To Your Love, in order that You may make of my heart a perpetual holocaust of pure love.

O Jesus! receive me now from the hands of Your Most holy Mother, offer me with Yourself and immolate me along with You. I offer myself to You by her hands in order that You may unite me to Your ceaseless Immolation, and that through me and by me You may satisfy the burning desire which You have to suffer for the glory of Your Father, the salvation of souls and especially the perfection and sanctification of Your priests and Your chosen souls.

Receive and accept me, I beg of You, in spite of my great

unworthiness and wretchedness. From henceforth I shall look upon all the crosses, all the sufferings, all the trials, which Your Providence has destined for me and will send me, as so many signs which will prove to me that You have accepted my humble offering. Amen.

(N). "As regards the Act of Immolation I give you full permission to make it. But do not complain to our dear Lord if He takes you at your word and makes you His victim. You need not fear whatever He may send you to bear, since His grace will come with it; but you should always try to keep in mind your offering, living up to the spirit of it. Hence endeavour to see the hand of God in everything that happens to you now; *e. g.* if you rise in the morning with a headache, thank Him for sending it, since a victim is one who must be immolated and crucified. Again, look upon all humiliations and crosses, failure and disappointment in your work, in a word, everything that is hard, as His seal upon your offering, and rouse yourself to bear all cheerfully and lovingly, remembering that you are to be His 'suffering love.' " (September, 1914.)

(5). THE CROSS.

Thus Fr. Doyle's ideal of conformity to God's will meant a gradual development of passive patient resignation into a joyful spontaneous acceptance of everything from God's hands and a watchful promptness, not only to obey the inspirations of grace, but also to embrace what he loved to call "the hard things." "As a rule you will find," he said, "that when you do the hard thing just because it is hard, great consolation and love always follow." While he utilised every psychological expedient to help spiritual progress, he never attempted to substitute an easy short cut for the royal road of the cross; there is no detour round the hill of Calvary. When a religious asked him for a spiritual motto, he wrote, "Lord, make me a saint and do not spare me in the making." And when the latter half was objected to, he rejoined, "If you desire

the accomplishment of the first part, you must be ready to accept generously and wholeheartedly the latter part—no compromise!" In this stern teaching, however, he was careful to emphasise three points and to guard against errors. (1) It is not a question of feelings, but of will. Naturally we hate suffering and dread pain; were it otherwise, we should be either coarsely or morbidly insensitive. The ideal is not to suppress or eliminate emotion and feeling, that would be an inhuman aim; nor is it even to attain an unnatural state of indifference and quiescence. The Christian ideal is rather to strengthen and elevate the will, the higher self; the struggle is one of soul, not of body. (2) Nor is it necessary to conjure up possibilities of suffering and humiliation; we need only live from day to day amid the circumstances which God's providence has woven round us. The imagination should not be allowed to terrify the soul by picturing future trials which may never come. There is no need for discouragement because one feels unable to pray for suffering. "To ask for suffering," says Fr. Doyle, "is often secret pride or presumption; but you may offer yourself to our Lord to bear whatever He may wish to send you."[25] (3) This attitude towards suffering will never be attained merely by concentrating on details, by immersing oneself in the actual trials to be borne. Our gaze should be fixed not on the Cross but on the Crucifix, not on self-crucifixion but on "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." (*I Cor.* 2. 2.) The mistake is often made by holy souls of allowing their attention to be engrossed in the petty details of their actual sufferings or premeditated penances, occupying themselves, as it were, in pin-pricking. It is bad psychology and bad spirituality. The apostles went forth "rejoicing that they were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus" (*Acts* 5. 41.); their joy was not in counting the stripes but in the thought of Jesus. And so it has

[25] Two other quotations. "Don't ask for suffering, but open your arms wide if it comes; abandon yourself to Him to as He pleases." It is not necessary to imagine extraordinary circumstances in the future; there is presumption in this; we must not count on ourselves as S. Peter did. Also there is a danger of despondency in such imaginings, when we do not feel capable of such tests of love. Examine the present."

ever been; the men and women who have dared and done hard things have always been led by some great ideal or overmastering passion. We shall face the Cross only if we are filled with the love of the Crucified.

(A). "I have long had the feeling that, since the world is growing so rapidly worse and worse and God has lost His hold, as it were, upon the hearts of men, He is looking all the more earnestly and anxiously for big things from those who are faithful to Him still. He cannot, perhaps, gather a large army round His standard, but He wants every one in it to be a *Hero,* absolutely and lovingly devoted to Him; if only we could get inside that magic circle of generous souls, I believe there is no grace He would not give us to help on the work He has so much at heart, our personal sanctification. Every day you live means an infallible growth in holiness which may be multiplied a thousand times by a little generosity. When you get the chance hammer into the 'Little Flowers' around you that holiness means three things:—Love, Prayer, Sacrifice."

(B). "A want of will is the chief obstacle to our becoming saints. We are not holy because we do not really wish to become so. We would indeed gladly possess the virtues of the saints—their humility and patience, their love of suffering, their penance and zeal. But we are unwilling to embrace all that goes to make a saint and to enter on the narrow path which leads to sanctity. A strong will, a resolute will, is needed; a will which is not to be broken by difficulties or turned aside by trifling obstacles; a determination to be a saint and not to faint and falter because the way seems long and hard and narrow. A big heart, a courageous heart, is needed for sanctification, to fight our worst enemy—our own self-love." (20th November, 1905.)

(C). "'One thing is wanting to thee.' (*S. Luke* 18. 22.) How many souls there are upon whom Jesus looks with love, souls who are very dear to His Sacred Heart, for they have

done much and sacrificed much for Him. Yet He asks for more, He wants that last sacrifice, the surrender of that secret clinging to some trifling attachment, that their lives may be a perfect holocaust. How many souls hear this little voice, 'One thing is wanting to you that you may be perfect,' one generous effort to break away from the almost severed ties of self-love, and yet they heed it not. Liberty, home and family they have given up, the joys and pleasures of this world they have despised, for a life of easy comfort they have embraced the poverty of Christ; but still they cling to some trifling gratification, and heed not the pleadings of the Sacred Heart." (3rd November, 1905.)

(D). "Over and over again I asked myself, when reading that book,[26] was it not strange that I should come across the very ideas which had been in my mind so long: namely, the longing of our Lord for more souls who would be absolutely at His mercy, His pleasure and disposal; souls in whom He could work at will, knowing that they would never resist Him, even by praying to Him to lessen the trials He was sending; souls who were willing and longing to be sacrificed and immolated in spite of all the shrinking of weak human nature.

"Now I have long thought He wants that from you. And everything that is happening seems to point that way. If you make such a surrender of yourself absolutely into His hands, I know not what humiliations, trials and even sufferings may come upon you, though you must not ask for them. But He will send you grace in abundance to bear them, He will draw immense glory out of your loving crucifixion, and in spite of yourself He will make you a saint. . . . This must be chiefly an act of the will, for it would be unnatural not to feel trials or humiliations; but even when the tears of pain are falling, the higher nature can rejoice. You can see this is high perfection, but it will bring great peace to your soul. Our Lord will take the work of your sanctification into His

[26] Probably the Life of Mère Marie de Jésus (Marie Deluil-Martiny). See p. 147, 293 f.

own hands, if you keep the words of the *Imitation* (iii. 17. 1) ever before you: 'Child, suffer Me to do with thee whatever I will.' Do not be afraid for He would not ask this if He did not intend to find you the grace." (February, 1912.)

(E). "You must bear in mind that, if God has marked you out for very great graces and possibly a holiness of which you do not even dream, you must be ready to suffer; and the more of this comes to you, especially sufferings of soul, the happier it ought to make you. St. Vincent de Paul says that 'One of the most certain marks that God has great designs upon a person is when He sends desolation upon desolation, suffering upon suffering.' Love of God is holiness, but the price of love is *pain.* Round the treasure-house of His love, God has set a thorny hedge; those who would force their way through must not shrink when they feel the sharpness of the thorns piercing their very soul. But alas! how many after a step or two turn sadly back in fear, and so never reach the side of Jesus.

"You will see, therefore, that your present state is quite a natural one to expect, and instead of depressing you, should rather console and rejoice your heart. Do not be surprised if you find the life of sacrifice, constant sacrifice, a hard one. Crucifixion is ever so to human nature, even the big saints found that, and shrank from it with all their might. Poor weak human nature is ever crying, 'Come down from the Cross,' and the devils, of course, will pull us down if they can; the easier life of others, too, is a temptation to us and is naturally more attractive; all of which often plunges one into a feeling of sadness and that feeling of 'being crushed,' about which you speak."

(F). "You seem to be a little upset at not being able to *feel* more that you really love our Lord. The mere longing desire to do so is a certain proof that love, and much of it, exists in your heart. But you can test your love infallibly and find out how much you have by asking yourself this

question: What am I willing to suffer for Him? It is the test of St. Francis de Sales: 'Willingness to suffer is a certain proof of love.'[27] This question I will answer for you. Though naturally you dread and shrink from pain and humiliation, I am certain there is no humiliation or suffering which you would refuse to accept if God asked you to bear it. That being so, you can say to our Lord with all the confidence of Peter who seemed to doubt his own heart: Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee with all my heart and soul and strength, for I would gladly lay down my life for Thee." (March, 1913.)

(G). "You seem to be troubled that you cannot love God when trials come and all is darkness. But that is just the moment when you love Him most and prove your love the best. If only, when you are in desolation and dryness, you *force* yourself to utter an act of love or an oblation of yourself without a particle of feeling, you make an offering which is of surpassing value in His eyes and most pleasing to His Sacred Heart. A dry act of love is a real act of love, since it is all for Jesus and nothing for self. Therefore welcome the hard black days as real harvest time." (December, 1912.)

(H). "Don't lose sight of this principle, that true holiness is based on humility which can never be attained except by humiliations and plenty of them. Pray daily that 'the hard knocks of humiliation' may increase, for holiness will grow in proportion. Do not forget, with reference to what you have to suffer from others, that it is all part of God's plan for your sanctification. If you want to be a saint, you must suffer and in the way that pleases God, not yourself. Till you come to recognize that you are a 'football' and really deserve to be kicked by everyone, the grace of God will not produce its effect in your soul. 'He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid.' " (*S. Luke* 1. 48.) (March, 1916.)

[27] "The Blessed Angela of Foligno says that a desire to suffer is a certain proof of love."—S. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God* ix. 2, Eng. trans. 1860, p. 431.

(I). "I can quite understand your difficult position and the suffering caused—I can quite believe unintentionally—by the Sister you speak of. . . . Once get hold of the principle that all that happens comes straight from the hand of God, and you have found the secret of deep peace which nothing can disturb. You must look upon this Sister as the 'chisel' in the Almighty Worker's hand. He knows the best tool to use, and all we have to do is to let Him use it as He pleases. Don't expect that poor weak human nature will submit to the blows without a murmur. But with an effort of the will we can crush this down, until in the end what once caused us pain and tears becomes the source of great interior joy, since we have realised how these things help on our spiritual progress. Hence I would advise you without any hesitation, not to try to get a change unless it be to a house where you will have *two* disagreeable Sisters instead of one! This may sound a bit heroic, but . . . there is no happiness like seeking and embracing the 'hard things' for the love of Jesus." (July, 1914.)

(J). "Remember the devil is a bad spiritual director, and you may always recognise his apparently good suggestions by the disturbances they cause in the soul. Our Lord would never urge you to turn away from a path which is leading you nearer to Himself, nor frighten you with the prospect of future unbearable trials. If they do come, grace will come also and make you abound with joy in all your tribulations." (July, 1913.)

(K). "You must not be afraid of what is passing in your soul. It is what I have been hoping and looking for. Were you to tell me that you were inundated with sweetness and consolation I should have been disappointed, since you would seem to be missing the immense graces that come to you from this scourging of God's loving hand. Try to remember that what is happening is a mark of love, not of anger. 'Whom God loveth He chastiseth and He scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.' (*Heb.* 12. 5.) The inner sanctuary of God's love is set round, as it were, with a thick hedge of

sharp thorns. No wonder when one tries to force one's way through it and the thorns pierce to the very heart, human nature should cry out, and, alas! too often weakly turn back from the only road that leads to pure love; no wonder indeed, for this painful struggling, every step of which is, as it were, marked with blood, seems to anger Jesus and drive Him further away. But courage! He is only pretending, to test the valiant lover, and soon the sweets of victory will well repay the hardness of the fight." (February, 1912.)

(L). "You say that you are convinced that God intends you to be a great saint and that He wishes it ardently. He certainly has great graces prepared for you. But you must win your crown, my dear child, and draw down the eyes of His tender love by your generous persevering efforts. You have a long way to go yet. The ladder of perfection is reached but not mounted; and there is just a danger of sitting contentedly at the foot, measuring the distance to be climbed *later on* and thus putting off the day of sacrifice which Jesus asks. His Heart is opened to receive you; He points to it as your home and resting place; but the crown of thorns like a thick hedge bars the way. Are you afraid of pressing against those thorns which will wound and tear you as you force your way through? Have courage. The love of Jesus will sweeten it all and His strong right arm will support you if you are brave." (December, 1912.)

(M). "How many wish to belong entirely to Jesus without reserve or restriction? Most want to serve two masters, to be under two standards. A union of worldliness and devotion; a perpetual succession of sins and repentance; something given to grace, more to nature; fervour and tepidity by turns. Such is the state of many religious. Obligations are whittled down; rules are interpreted laxly; all kinds of excuses are invented for self-indulgence—health, greater glory of God in the end, etc. No service is so hard as the half-and-half; what is given to God costs more; His yoke is heavy;

the cross is dragged, not cheerfully carried; the thought of what is refused to grace causes remorse and sadness; there is no pleasure from the world and little from the service of Christ."

(N). "If I have resolved to nail myself to the cross, let me bear ever in mind that our Lord is on the other side of it. When I am tempted to come down, let me stir up my courage by recalling this scene of Calvary and resolve after the example of my Lord and Master to remain fastened to it unto death. I must beware of listening, or above all of yielding, to the universal chorus of voices which will cry out to me to come down. 'Come down or you will ruin your health.' 'Come down and be like the rest of us.' 'Come down or you will render yourself unfit for your work.' 'Come down and walk in the beaten track.' 'Come down, what you are doing is an innovation and cannot be tolerated.' Alas! human respect only too often does make us relax, and down we come. Or we say to our Lord, 'The agony is too long or too distressing, I must have some relief; only just take out one of the nails, Lord, and give me a little respite.' It is the spirit of the times to relax—only a little bit, but nevertheless to relax. Ah no! I will imitate our Lord, I will live on the cross and with Him I will die on the cross." (At a retreat.)

(O). "I think it is evident that, in these days of awful sin and hatred of God, our Blessed Lord wants to gather round Him a legion of chosen souls who will be devoted, heart and soul, to Him and His interests, and upon whom He may always count for help and consolation. Souls who will not ask 'How much *must* I do?' but rather 'How much *can* I do for His love? A legion of souls who will give and not count the cost, whose only pain will be that they cannot do more and give more and suffer more for Him who has done so much for them. In a word, souls who are not as the rest of men, fools perhaps in the eyes of the world, for their watchword is *sacrifice* and not self-comfort.

"Now, my dear child, our divine Saviour seems to have

turned His eyes of love upon you and asked you are you willing to join His Bodyguard; not on account of any merit or good quality on your part, but, as He told B. Margaret Mary, because you are an abyss of unworthiness in His pure eyes. Still, it should make your heart bound with joy to think that He has given you such a loving call; for if only you are faithful to Him and exact in following His inspirations, He will raise you to a height of sanctity you do not dare to dream of now." (July, 1914.)

(P). "You are treading in the right path, the path our divine Lord wants you to walk in, that of humiliation and suffering. It seems to me that these are the two things dearest to His Heart and that when He finds a soul willing to take up this secret apostleship, His love and affection for that soul, no matter how unworthy in other respects, seems to have no bounds. It was this willingness in you, my child, to be humbled and trodden under the feet of all, which first drew down His eyes of mercy. And now that you have offered yourself as His Victim to be consumed in the furnace of suffering should He so wish it, there is no grace He will not bestow on you. But remember the devil will spoil the work if he can, and by every means in his power turn you from your life of immolation. However I know you are brave and loving, which will carry you over many a difficulty. *Sursum corda.* Often look upwards towards the reward, the price of victory—great sanctity and a multitude of souls given back to the arms of Jesus."

(Q). "You may make the most complete and absolute offering of yourself to God to bear every pain He may wish to send. Renew this frequently and place yourself in His hands as His willing victim to be immolated on the altar of sacrifice. But it is better not to ask directly for great sufferings; few of the saints did so." [28] (April, 1912.)

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[28] Compare Mgr. d'Hulst: "After offering the Holy Sacrifice for you and praying, I tell you there is a slight change to be made in the terms of your offering. Instead of wishing for suffering, you must wish for the surrender of

(R). "I read through your diary of little victories with intense joy, until I came to the entry, 'actually felt glad at receiving a snub to-day,' when I felt my cup of happiness was full. . . . This is what I have been longing for. . . . To yearn for, to seek and delight in the hard thing, is not only the road to heroic sanctity, but means a life of wonderful interior joy." (February, 1916.)

(S). "God wants you to suffer *willingly*. Many rebel and fight against what God gives them; many more take their cross in a resigned 'can't be helped' spirit; but very few look upon these things as real blessings and kiss the Hand that strikes them." (1912.)

(6.) LITTLE THINGS

Idealism, however fervent and absorbing, must never be an excuse for vague and unpractical emotion. As already pointed out, the genius of S. Ignatius consisted in his careful and methodic exploitation of religious energy. Steam is of no use, rather a nuisance, until we have a cylinder and piston for it. How much spiritual fervour goes to waste, without a particular examen and definite applications! A gallon of petrol might be misused to blow a car sky-high; with care and inventiveness it can be employed to propel it to the top of a hill. These comparisons will show us that Ignatius, though a soldier, might be even more aptly described as a spiritual engineer. There is always this touch in Jesuit spirituality. Not too much of the spectator's aesthetic appreciation of a mighty spiritual cataract, rather a tendency to calculate its horse-power and to get it harnessed and guided. In the

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your whole self to all He may desire of you."—*The Way of the Heart: Letters of Direction*, Eng. trans. 1913, p. 306. S. Philip Neri "did not enter into the spirit of those who, with too much trust in their own strength, ask God to send them tribulations: he rather desired his children to pray that the Lord would of His infinite goodness grant them patience in those trials or annoyances which should happen to them from day to day."—*Life* by Bacci, Eng. trans. 1868 [2], p. 249.

case of a naturally impulsive, emotional and perhaps wayward character like that of Fr. Doyle, the effects and advantages of this applied science of the soul are particularly obvious. Not only in his own case, but especially in directing others, he sought not to deaden energy, not to paralyse willpower, not to kill emotion, but to convert them all into driving forces for the mills of God. And God's mills grind exceeding slow! The just awakened energy of the novice usually seeks to expend itself in weird ventures, in sudden outburst, in anarchic violence, in impossible outlets. Ordinary life, with its dull tasks and sluggish routine, seems unworthy of the high ideals and chivalrous emprise of one who has caught the accents of Christ. So too thought the erstwhile Don Iñigo, now Christ's pilgrim, clad in the picturesque aristocracy of sheer beggary. Far otherwise did he begin to think as he toiled at Latin grammar in Barcelona, learnt logic at Alcalà and studied theology at Paris. And finally this great stream of spiritual energy which started with wild turbulence in Loyola and Manresa, is conveyed—sluiced and piped, as it were,—to a dingy room in Rome where Ignatius dealt with administration and correspondence.

It is the lesson which Fr. Doyle loved to teach. He showed his spiritual children how to focus their idealism on the seemingly little things of life and the day's drab details. Little things—why do we call them little at all? We must not measure spirituality in cubic feet, nor should we judge holiness by the acreage of our activities. "Nothing is too small to offer to God," Fr. Doyle used to say; for what is small to men may be great in the Master's eyes. It is in little acts that heroism is acquired, it is by patient perseverance and methodic effort that sanctity is won.[29] Such is the message straight from his own life, a life whose real greatness was within.

(A). "What more insignificant than the ordinary daily duties of religious life! Each succeeding hour brings with it some allotted task, yet in the faithful performance of these

[29] Fr. Doyle was very insistent on businesslike and systematic efforts. Thus he would make his penitent note down certain failings or acts of self-denial and on his next visit he would carefully inspect the little book.

trifling acts of our everyday life lies the secret of true sanctity. Too often the constant repetition of the same acts, though in themselves they be of the holiest nature, makes us go through them in a mechanical way. We meditate, we assist at holy Mass, more from a sense of duty than from any affection to prayer. Our domestic duties, our hours of labour, of teaching, are faithfully discharged—but what motive has animated us in their performance? Have we not worked because we *must*, or unconsciously because the bell has rung, rather than from the motive of pleasing God and doing His will?" (15th April, 1905.)

(B). "One thing I ask of you, dear child: Don't be a saint by halves, but give Him all He asks and always."

C). "Life is only a day quickly passed and gone, but the merit of it, the glory given to God, will remain for ever. Give Him all you can generously and lovingly, do not let one little sacrifice escape you, they are dear to Him because He finds so few really generous souls who think only of Him and never of themselves."

(D). "Live for the day, as you say—but let it be a generous day. Have you ever tried giving God one day in which you refused Him nothing, a day of absolute generosity?"

(E). "Try to take your days one by one as they come to you. The hard things of yesterday are past, and you are not asked to bear what to-morrow may have in store; so that the cross is really light when you take it bit by bit." (November, 1914.)

(F). "I am glad you have found profit from the particular examen. You must push on with this, for remember you are no beginner in the spiritual life. From time to time increase the number of acts when you find facility coming. However it is better to keep to a fixed number steadily than to go jumping up and down, better, for example, to make twenty-

five acts every day than fifty one day and ten the next. The rule to keep before you is: Look upon nothing as too small to offer to God. Big sacrifices do not come very often, and generally we are too cowardly to make them when they do. But little ones are as plentiful as blackberries in September, and stiffen the moral courage, by the constant repetition of them, to do, in the end, even heroic things. Expect, too, that at times this steady keeping up the fixed number will pall upon you; possibly you will even pitch up the examen for a day or two, but pick it up again and no harm will be done; these failures will become fewer by degrees. Again, nothing is too small; in fact the smaller it is the better, so long as it is some denial of your will, some act you would just as soon not do." (February, 1912.)

(G). "Possibly you have been a little too generous in the time of fervour and have attempted more than you were able for, which would account in part, at least, for the feeling of 'being crushed.' However you should have been prepared to find that the generous spirit which carried you along from sacrifice to sacrifice was not intended to last, it was only meant to strengthen you for the time of trial. To serve God generously when the music of consolation is sounding in our ears is no doubt pleasing to Him, but to be equally faithful when all is black and dark is not only a thousand times more sanctifying, but is heroic virtue. Hence God in His eagerness for our perfection takes away, at times, all sensible consolation, yet is really nearer to us than before.

"The great danger to be faced is that one feels inclined to lose heart, to be discouraged—'the devil's pet walking stick'—and in the end to give up all striving for perfection, aiming only at being content with that curse of every religious house —Mediocrity.

"As I said before, my dear child, I fancy you tried to do too much, to be too generous. Do not try to run till you can walk well. Draw up a list of certain little sacrifices which you feel God is asking from you and which you know you will be able to give Him without very much difficulty—better be

cowardly than too generous. Then, come what may, be faithful to your list and shake it in the face of the tempter when he suggests that you should give it up. After some time, when greater facility has come by practice, you might add a little to what you did at first, and so on till, please God, one day you will be able to say, 'I know only Jesus Christ, and Him crucified; with Christ I am nailed to the Cross.' " (*I Cor.* 2. 2; *Galat.* 2. 19.)

(H). "I think He would like you to pay more attention to *little things*, looking on nothing as small, if connected with His service and worship. Also try to remember that nothing is too small to offer to Him—that is, the tiniest act of self-conquest is of immense value in His eyes, and even lifting one's eyes as an act of love brings great grace."

(I). "I want you to stick to two things: the aspirations and the tiny acts of self-conquest. Count them and mark them *daily*. You need nothing else to make you a saint. The weekly total, growing bigger as you persevere, will show you how fast you are growing in perfection."

(J). "It is indeed easy to condemn oneself to death, to make a generous offering of self-immolation; but to carry out the execution daily is more than most can do. . . . Go on bravely, don't expect too much from yourself, for God often leaves one powerless in acts of self-conquest in order to make one humble and to have more recourse to Him. Remember above all that even one small victory makes up for a hundred defects."

(K). "The notebook was most helpful to me as showing the way by which Jesus is leading you to perfection if only you have the courage to face it. All these trials, snubs, unpleasantnesses, etc., do not come to you by chance. They are precious jewels from the hand of God; and, if you could only bring yourself to look upon them in the right light, they would make you a really great saint."

(L. "I am truly glad you are looking to the perfection of your daily actions. It is the simplest, yet perhaps hardest, way of sanctification, with little fear of deception. It is the certain following of Christ who 'did all things well.'" (*S. Mark* 7. 37.)

(M). "If the servant told me someone was waiting below to give me £1,000, would I say, 'Do not bother me, it is too much trouble'? One little act of self-denial is more precious. Yet having let the occasion slip, I remain quite unconcerned. Should I not make a study to see how in everything I may practise mortification?"

(N). "Two wings by which we can fly to God and become saints: the habit of little tiny acts of self-denial and the habit of making a definite fixed number of aspirations every day."

(O). "Your ardent desire to love God is the best proof of a real love for Him. But are we not all very much to blame for not growing faster in this love, since we have the certain means in our hands? Ten little acts a day—'My God, I love you'—mean ten new degrees of love in our hearts. So it is only a question of *persevering work* to reach a big real love for Him. Every action can be made into an act of love which will infallibly increase our store each day." (April, 1912.)

(P). "Don't dwell on what you have done. That shows a want of confidence in God's willingness to forgive our shortcomings and reward our efforts. Rather, *sursum corda,* lift up your heart and think what you are going to do for the Master now. You know the secret of making a short life very long in His eyes, and a life of few opportunities crammed full of precious things—*Do every tiny thing for His sweet love alone.*"

(7.) PRAYER

The extracts given above from Fr. Doyle's letters make it evident that the ideals which he sought to impress on others

were partial transcripts from his own inner life. It will therefore be clear that his strenuous advocacy of prayer was also born in his personal experience. This indeed has already been made manifest in dealing with his belief in the apostolate of prayer and in the efficacy of aspirations. Hence it will be sufficient to collect here a few further quotations. Brief as these are, they illustrate his conviction of the importance of prayer, his idea that it ought, so to speak, be spread out thinly over one's day or one's life as well as heaped up in the early morning or during a retreat, his wonderful faith in prayer as the unseen motive-power of missionary effort. "Get more prayer into your life if you can," "Give the full time to spiritual duties," are typical pieces of advice. He never held out delusive prospects of easy contemplation. "Don't forget," he wrote once, "that prayer is the hardest corporal penance." "It is an unnatural thing," he said another time, "that is, a supernatural thing, and hence must be hard always; for prayer takes us out of our natural element. But pray on all the same." There is only one way of learning, he used to say, and that is to pray often, to fill up all the little chinks and interstices of our day with aspirations and prayers. "Keep in God's presence going through the house and try to grasp then any lights you may have got in prayer." On the other hand, he tried to make prayer as easy, unstrained and familiar as he could. He prescribed no rigid method, he made no attempt to move all along the same groove. "Follow the attraction of the Holy Spirit, for all souls are not led by the same path." was his tolerant counsel.[30] He would have agreed with St. Teresa's saying: [31] "Mental prayer is, in my opinion, nothing else but being on terms of friendship with God, frequently conversing in secret with Him who, we know, loves us."

(A). "You seem to have fallen into the common snare of Satan, namely, mistaking your work for prayer and pouring

[30] Once when a religious, a penitent of his, asked him how he himself prayed, he knelt down and with childlike simplicity and directness repeated some of the thoughts and prayers of his morning meditation.

[31] *Life* viii. 7.

yourself out over it. Thus the soul gets dried up and the body so fatigued that a proper service of God is impossible. Give the full time to spiritual duties. Try to get a minute to yourself, and a half hour on Sundays, and walk about quietly and examine your state. Note where you have fallen off, etc., and begin again, instead of waiting for the next retreat to pull you up."

(B). "You seem lately to have had a bad attack of want of confidence in God and a feeling of despair of ever becoming a saint. Yet, my dear child, it is neither impossible or hopeless as long as God leaves it in our power to pray. You know these words of Fr. de Ravignan (leaflet enclosed).[32] I never realized how true they were until I began to go about the country and get into close touch with souls. I assert fearlessly that if only we all prayed enough, and I mean by that a constant, steady, unflagging stream of aspirations, petitions, etc., from the heart, there is not one, no matter how imperfect, careless or even sinful, who would not become a saint and a big one. I am perfectly and painfully conscious that, for my own part, I do not pray a hundredth part of what I should or what God wants."

(C). "Without constant union with our Lord there is not and cannot be any real holiness, one reason being that without recollection the inspirations of the Holy Spirit are missed and with them a host of opportunities of little sacrifices and a shower of graces. As a means of gaining greater recollection, each morning at Holy Communion invite Jesus to dwell in your heart during the day as in a tabernacle. Try all day to imagine even His bodily presence within you and

[32] This leaflet contained the words: "Believe me, my dear friends, believe an experience ripened by thirty years in the sacred ministry. I do here affirm that all deceptions, all spiritual deficiencies, all miseries, all falls, all faults, and even the most serious wanderings out of the right path, all proceed from this single source—a want of constancy in prayer. Live the life of prayer, learn to bring everything, to change everything into prayer—pains and trials and temptations of all kinds. "Cf. Ravignan, *Entretiens et pensées*, Paris 1859 [2], p. 265; or *Conferences on the Spiritual Life*, Eng. trans. (Ram.) 1903 [6], p. 167.

often turn your thoughts inwards and adore Him as He nestles next your heart in a very real manner, quite different from His presence in all creation. This habit is not easily acquired, especially in a busy life like yours, but much may be done by constant effort. At times you will have to leave Him alone entirely, but as soon as you can, get back to His presence again." (February, 1912.)

(D). "As regards prayer, you should try to follow the attraction of the Holy Spirit, for all souls are not led by the same path. It would not be well to spend all the time in vocal prayer, there should be some meditation, thought or contemplation. Try 'basking in the sun of God's love,' that is, quietly kneeling before the Tabernacle, as you would sit enjoying the warm sunshine, not trying to do anything, except love Him, but realizing that, during all the time you are at His feet, more especially when dry and cold, grace is dropping down upon your soul and you are growing fast in holiness." (May, 1913.)

(E). "You ask how to pray well—the answer is, Pray often, in season and out of season, against yourself, in spite of yourself—there is no other way. What a man of prayer St. James, the Apostle, (his feast is to-day) must have been since his knees became like those of a camel! When shall we religious realize the power for good that prayer, constant, unflagging prayer, puts into our hands? Were you convinced of this, you would not 'envy me my spiritual work.' Because if you liked, you could do more than any priest who is not a man of prayer, though you might not have the satisfaction of seeing the result in this world. Did it ever strike you that when our Lord pointed out the 'fields white for the harvest,' He did not urge His Apostle to go and reap it, but *to pray?*" [33] (May, 1912.)

(F). " 'I have called upon Thee in the day of my trouble.' (*Psalm* 85. 7) Jesus is our comforter. What burden is

[33] *S. John* 4. 35; *S. Matthew* 9. 38.

there which He cannot lighten? What cross, He cannot make sweet? Be our troubles what they may, if only we will call on Jesus and implore His aid, we shall find our sufferings lessen and the rough ways smoother for our bleeding feet." (8th February, 1905.)

(G). "How often have we murmured against the good God because He has refused our petitions or frustrated our plans. Can we look into the future as God can do? Can we see now and realize to the full the effect our request would have had if granted? God loves us, He loves us too dearly to leave us to the guidance of our poor judgements; and when He turns a deaf ear to our entreaties, it is as a tender Father would treat the longings of a child for what would work him harm." (24th February, 1905.)

(H). "You are bound to throw yourself heart and soul into the work God has given you to do. The devil's object is to get you so absorbed in your work, so anxious and worried about its success, that you will become, as you say, a religious only in name. However, to see his snares, as St. Ignatius calls them, is half the battle. You must go directly against what he wants. But how? First try to stir up your faith and see in everything, big and little, that happens the hand of God, remembering that He is often more glorified by our failure than by success. This will prevent irritability, and having done your best, will lessen worry, though for most of us it is impossible quite to free ourselves from that weakness. Next, a big effort, and it needs a big one at first, resolutely to give every moment to the spiritual duties and to shut out every other thought. Prayer calms the soul as nothing else can, more especially if during the day you help the grace of God by trying to keep your heart united with God, who is dwelling within your very soul. At all costs you must conquer and keep your peace of mind (after all in a few years what will it matter to any of us whether we have gained success or not?), otherwise good-bye to holiness. . . . Though little acts of penance and aspirations may seem

to be done mechanically, on no account should you omit them, they are far more meritorious in your present state." (October, 1911.)

(I). "You seem to be a little troubled at finding yourself cold at prayer and as if our Lord had abandoned you. Were it otherwise I should feel uneasy; for this is one of the best signs that you are really pleasing to God, since He puts your fidelity to the test by sending desolation. There is no happiness to be compared to the sweets one tastes at times in prayer; but this, the greatest of all sacrifices, He will ask from you at times. Hence in darkness and dryness, when weariness and disgust come on you, when the thousand petty worries of every day crowd upon you, *sursum corda,* raise your eyes with a glad smile to the face of Jesus, for all is well and He is sanctifying you." (October, 1912.)

(J). "Work away at the life of union, but union remember with God *within* you, not outside; so many go wrong on this point. Do not give up prayer on any account, no matter how dry or 'rotten' you feel; every moment, especially before Him in the Tabernacle, is a certain, positive gain; the effect will be there though you may not feel it. If you feel drawn 'to rest in God,' to let yourself sink down as it were into Him, do so without bothering to say anything. I think the best of all prayers is just to kneel quietly and let Jesus pour Himself into your soul." (July, 1917.)

(K) "A deadly pitfall lies hidden in the desire of some to pour themselves out in works of zeal for God's glory, to which the evil spirit not uncommonly urges those whom he sees full of zeal. It is evident, even to one little versed in the way of the spiritual life, that a multiplicity of external occupations, even though good and meritorious in themselves, must by their very nature hinder that calm peace of soul which is essential for interior union with God.

"For one who has advanced in the way of interior union, no life, no matter how occupied or full of distracting work,

will prove much of a hindrance; such a one has learned how to ride on the waves of worldly care and not to be engulfed by them, he refuses to put himself out or be totally absorbed in things which have only a fleeting interest; but it is not so with the beginner in the spiritual life. Overwork has broken down not a few weakly bodies but has ruined far more souls, drying up if not destroying all love for prayer and the things of God, leaving the wreck of many a 'spoiled saint' strewn on the road of life.

"A heavy responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who heap an impossible burden on the shoulders of the 'willing horse,' more anxious for the material success of their particular charitable undertaking than for the spiritual progress of those whom God has entrusted to their care." (1916.)

(L). "Show me one saint, one holy man or woman, who did not pray often and pray much. Prayer is absolutely essential for any degree of sanctity. This is one rule at least that admits of no exception."

(M). "Three things are needed to acquire a habit of frequent ejaculatory prayer: a little generosity, a little drill, and *huge* perseverance.

"A habit of ejaculatory prayer is a sign of nearness to God, for our holiness will be in proportion to our love and thought of Him all day long."

(N). "Another lesson I have learnt is the powerful weapon we have in prayer. How much His interests may be helped at any moment of the day, easily and surely! Oh, how much we could all do for Him and His interests, how many poor souls would be saved daily, if only we filled in the chinks of our full lives with aspirations." (April, 1916.)

(O). " 'He went out into a mountain to pray; and He passed the whole night in the prayer of God.' (*Luke* 6. 12.) Christ prays, on His knees, humbly, reverently. I watch Him well during this great act of His life. Lord, teach me how to pray like You. He goes up into a mountain, away

from all that may distract Him. He leaves His preaching, His work, even the thought of it, behind. In quiet and solitude He goes on His knees, humbly as a creature, reverently as a child. He had gone through a long hard day's work, He was weary, longing for rest and sleep. Yet He passed the *whole* night in the prayer of God. To teach me the need of prayer, to teach me to love prayer, to teach me to persevere in prayer."

(P). "The life of Jesus was a continual prayer. Even during His public life He began, continued and ended everything He did by prayer, besides devoting whole nights and days to communing with His Father. If we want our work for souls to be fruitful, we must bring prayer into it. If our children are not all that they ought to be, the cause may not be far to seek. Let us examine if we are praying enough for them, if our aspirations are ever ascending to the throne of God, to bless our work amongst those children and amongst others with whom we have to deal."

(8.) MORTIFICATION

It will be useful to record here some sentences conveying Fr. Doyle's advice to many different correspondents on the subject of penance. In this matter he always laid stress on mortification of the *will*, especially concerning habitual faults. At times he could put this very bluntly. Thus a religious who was rather addicted to criticism and comment asked him to recommend her some special acts of self-denial to be practised at table. "I recommend you, my dear Sister," he replied, "to put a little mustard on your tongue!" So while he firmly inculcated asceticism, he was by no means a fanatic for bodily penance. The following quotations will clearly prove his gentleness, thoughtfulness, and prudence. "He saved others, himself he cannot save." (*S. Matthew* 27. 42.) Is there not a sense in which this is true, not only of Christ, but of His saints?

(A). "I am glad you wrote to me for I, at least, can understand exactly what you are suffering; it is really a question of nerves, not of soul. You are run down like an old fiddle string, hence you can get no sweet music out of yourself, try as you may. Now, my child, don't be troubled or uneasy, imagining God is displeased with you or that you are abusing grace. For a little while give yourself all the rest, relaxation and indulgence you can; there is to be no penance, few spiritual duties, except Mass and Communion, and you are just to do like a little child whatever your superiors tell you, read story books, etc.; rest and quiet is to be your programme just now. When the old nerves get a bit settled, you will run ahead like a giant to sanctity. I am afraid you must make up your mind for fits of depression from time to time, but that, too, will pass when you become more your old self. I shall pray for you and I know you will do the same when you get good again, but not before!" (May, 1912.)

(B). "It ought to encourage you to feel the desire for penance growing in your soul. After all is it not a mockery to call ourselves the spouses of a *crucified* Love if our lives are not to some extent crucified also? You need to be careful in the matter of privation of sleep more than in other things, but let there be no limit to interior mortification."

(C). "Every little victory in the matter of food is a real triumph, for this is a real test of generosity. You will find many persons given to prayer, works of zeal, penance, but most seem to fly from the denial of their appetite. 'My health, Father; the greater glory of God, etc.' St. Francis de Sales used to say, 'Unless you deny your appetite, you will never be a saint'—a mighty saying!" [34]

(D). "To stay on your feet when you have a bad headache

[34] "I assert whoever is attached to the pleasures of the table or does not seriously attend to the mortification of the appetite, will never make any considerable progress in perfection.—S. Alphonsus de' Liguori, *True Spouse of Christ*, Eng. trans., Dublin, 1893, p. 147.

may be even heroic and is not likely to injure you in any way. What a love the saints all had for suffering! There must be something in it."

(E). "I want you to give up *all* corporal penance and to take for your particular examen 'self-denial in little things.' Make ten acts for each examen, and the more trivial they are the better, so you will do twenty a day." (January, 1912.)

(F). "I believe strongly in corporal penance as a means to the end. But a denial of your own will often costs more than a hundred strokes of the discipline. To interior penance you need not, and must not, put any limit." [35] (February, 1912.)

(G). "If you are not yet strong enough to seek humiliations, just accept the little reverses that come. When you say or do awkward things, give them to our Lord and tell Him you are glad of them. Say: 'All these are humiliations, so they *must* be good for me.' "

(H). "For the present do not increase your corporal penances. You do not say anything about mortification at meals; in quantity there must be none, or not often; as regards quality, you need not be so particular. But the big penance must be the joyful embracing, for the love of suffering Jesus, the many little hard and painful things which come to you hourly. Take them all from His hand sweetly, trying to seek the unpleasant things and the hard disagreeable things; and keep hammering away at the tiny acts of self-denial. This is the goal to aim at: I am never to do a thing I like. Don't try to do that at present—it might easily dishearten and crush you—but keep it always in view."

[35] "We have nothing of our own but our will," says the Curé of Ars. "It is the only thing which God has so placed in our own power that we can make an offering of it to Him. Thus we may be assured that a single act of renunciation of the will is more pleasing to God than a fast of thirty days."—A Monnin, *Life of the B. Curé d'Ars*, p. 251. "Oh how I love those little mortifications which are seen by no one, such as to rise a quarter of an hour earlier or to rise a few moments in the night for prayer!" (*ibid.* p. 97). (In the new trans. by Wolferstan, 1924, p. 155.)

(I). "I do not want, in fact I forbid you, to be imprudent in the matter of corporal penances. But, my dear child, if you let a whole fortnight go by without any self-inflicted pain, can you honestly look Jesus in the face and say, 'I am like to Him?' "

(J). "I must warn you against the danger of wishing to go too fast or to do too much at first. You must begin humbly and build up—that is, increase your penances by degrees, otherwise you might be very generous for a short time, then get tired and give up all. As a rule do not make any penance a great burden—it is better to discontinue it if it becomes such—nor do anything excessive or continued very long."

(K). "Your desire for penance is an excellent sign, and this in spite of what X said. But have a fixed amount to be done each day and do not be doing it in fits and starts. Anything like what you call 'frenzy' ought to be suspected and resisted."

(L). "In urging you to be generous, I wish you at the same time to be sensible. Keep in mind these two rules. (1) If after honest trial you find anything is really injurious or hampers your work, it must be abandoned. (2) Be on your guard lest the body be too much oppressed and the spirit take harm, as says wise Ignatius.[36] Everything is not for everyone, nor must you undertake too much in the beginning." (1912.)

(M). "I can realise well the awful repugnance, the loathing which at times you feel for the life Jesus asks from you. You are quite right, and I wish you to relax a little, especially if depressed or not very well. But again at times, when you feel overcome and ready to fling it all to the winds, generously face the tempter and conquer him by doing some extra

[36] "It is not good that anyone should be so loaded with bodily work that the spirit is oppressed and the body suffers harm."—*Summarium Constitutionum*, 47.

penance. I think it would be more prudent not to ask for a dispensation from the evening meditation. Also if you find that looking on the works of God in nature raises your heart to Him, do so; for I do not think He would wish you to carry out your life of self-denial in things which help to your perfection." (May, 1912.)

(N). "I must thank you for your kind letter and the basket of 'flowers,' which had a delicious perfume; though I missed one flower from the basket, the purple passion-flower of acts of self-conquest, the one thing which makes religious life a paradise from the interior joy they always bring. Though I don't practise what I preach, I have urged this during retreats in season and out of season; and many who have generously taken it up have told me it has made them 'fly to God.'

"Two little rules will help you to get this spirit: (1) the advice of À Kempis, 'Seek always to do the will of another rather than your own'; (2) train yourself to say no to your yes and yes to your no."

(O). "'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.' (*Matthew* 16. 24.) With S. Peter we tell our Lord that we will follow Him; and the first time an occasion of going against ourselves turns up, we turn our back upon Him: This saying is hard, we can't do it. And yet this conquest of self is the following of Christ. There is a certain amount of glory attached to great acts of mortification, but the little ones known only to God and ourselves are much harder to practise because of their very continuance. There is some satisfaction about the big trials, they are quickly over and attract attention. The tiny acts of self-denial are always with us."

(P). "The spirit of the present day, even in religious houses, seems to be one of comfort, of the exclusion of pain, especially self-inflicted; and yet Jesus appears ever to be pleading for someone to suffer together with Him, and to

live up to the words of S. Paul: 'Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies.' " (*II Cor.* 4. 10.)

(Q). "One has to be a little cautious when there is an urging to great penance, since it may be only the devil at work. Knowing you as I do, however, I think that your desire is heaven-sent and that you are not mistaken in saying God wants more penance from you. But for the present make no great change in the matter of food. If you feel drawn to, and are able for, more corporal mortification, ask permission for what you would like to do, and I shall see if it should be granted. Keep within the bounds of commonsense, but do not be afraid of generosity. More saints are spoiled in the making through over-prudence than injured by imprudence. A really crucified life must be harmful to a certain extent; but what the body loses in strength, the soul gains in vigour."

(R). "The mortification good for you may be measured by your peace of mind. If you find your soul troubled by the penance you practise or feel urged to practise, you should suspect the spirit that is leading you. Give all you can, but let it be the 'cheerful giver' whom God loves. When the sacrifice is costing you too much and ruffles the spirit, go a little slower and all will be well."

(S). "I have so completely given you into the keeping of our Blessed Lord that what you tell me does not make me uneasy. Perhaps you have been a little over-generous and imprudent and have taxed your strength too much. But even from your present state you may draw much spiritual profit. It will serve to humble you, to show you how utterly dependent you are on God, and to make you trust Him more in the future. I thank Him that you are suffering, for that is sweet to His Heart, and will ease the pain of love in yours. After all, you have not yet 'resisted unto blood' nor has sheer physical weakness made you faint, as Jesus did. Still the immolation He wants from you now is the hardest of all,

the sacrifice of your will to the will of your Superior. Obey her exactly in everything, and till the end of the month lay aside all penance and 'let nature caper!'" (July, 1912.)

(T). "Human endurance has its limits, and we cannot expect our Lord to set aside the laws of nature and work miracles to sustain us in our austerities. Hence it would not be right 'to put aside all human prudence' in practising mortification. All the same you need not follow the laws of prudence in their entirety, and conclude that what others find necessary for their health, or imagine so, must be your rule also. Test yourself gradually and see what you can do, always bearing in mind that the more your life is crucified the closer will be your resemblance to your Suffering Love, whose life on earth was not one of joy and comfort but of suffering, 'who having joy put before Him *chose* to suffer.'[37] What a grace to choose the hard thing, the crown of thorns, when Jesus gives us the choice of the opposite!" (February, 1914.)

[37] "Who, having joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame."—*Hebr.* 12. 2.

Chapter X

MILITARY CHAPLAIN

(1916)

THERE has hitherto been nothing outwardly remarkable in Fr. Doyle's life. Hence his biography has largely consisted in a study of his spiritual ideals and of those interior strivings and hidden virtues which were mostly unknown even to those with whom he lived. But now there comes a phase in his life which can be esteemed, not only by those who know the inner springs of action, but also by such as measure worth by external achievement. It is only when the life which was hidden in religious houses and expressed in the ordinary activities of a missioner, is transferred to dug-out and trench and is seen amid the reek and din of battle, that most people will appreciate greatness of soul. There is herein a further advantage. Many who read the chapters on Fr. Doyle's interior life and mortifications will be inclined to picture him as a dour austere individual in whom the sources of human feelings and genuine affection had been dried up. And, on the other hand, they who knew him only as a military chaplain, saw indeed his wonderful geniality and helpfulness, but could hardly suspect the inner drama of his soul, his mystic immolation and unceasing recollection. Now it is precisely the juxtaposition of these two aspects which is necessary in order to judge Fr. Doyle's character as a whole and to see whence heroism comes and whither holiness leads. The events of the last year and a half of his life will, therefore, be recounted more in detail. This is fortunately possible with the aid of the long letters which he regularly sent to his Father, supplemented by a few more intimate notes and jottings. This correspondence was, of course, never intended for publication;

it is therefore the more interesting biographically. Its direct and homely language is far more eloquent than any attempt at studied composition. For we have not only a vivid picture of what warfare really means, but also the accurate transcript of one man's actual thoughts and deeds.

Though the primary object with which extracts from Fr. Doyle's letters are here reproduced is to throw light on his spiritual development and ideals, yet incidentally they constitute a valuable historical document and give us a viewpoint (that of the 16th Division) not easily accessible elsewhere. Considering the difficulties under which they were written and the military censorship to which they were subjected, they are remarkably accurate and even picturesque. "I often wonder," he once wrote to his Father, "I often wonder how you manage to decipher my 'spider-crawls' which do duty for handwriting, for I seldom have the chance of using a table and nearly always scribble away on my knee, sometimes even standing, and often so bothered by the never-ceasing crash and bang of the guns that I scarce know what I am jotting down." "Sitting on a wet sandbag, with one's feet in four inches of mud," he writes on another occasion, "is not an ideal condition for composition." [1]

As a piece of war-literature these letters have been highly appreciated. "The two chapters devoted to his experience as chaplain, told mostly from his home letters, are (according to the Editor of an English Catholic journal [2]) as vivid as anything we have read about the war, and throw a wonderful light upon both its horrors and its consolations." "Those who have taken part in the war will read this book with special interest," declares a German review.[3] "The des-

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[1] Besides his personal letters and news-budgets he wrote many letters to oblige soldiers, prisoners, and relatives. "Often for days," he tells his sister on 13th December, 1916, "I cannot write a line; and correspondence has increased very much, so many people want to know about their relatives."

[2] *Month,* April, 1920, p. 386. Cf. *Catholic Press* (Sydney), 13th May, 1920: "The portion of the story dealing with Fr. Doyle's career as Chaplain at the Front is one of thrilling interest. These pages give us more vivid pictures of the war than we remember to have seen, with perhaps the exception of Patrick MacGill's wonderful pages.

[3] *Würzburger Kath. Sonntagsblatt,* No. 36, 1923.

cription of his last experiences, sketched by Fr. Doyle himself, belongs to the pearls of the war-literature." The following pages may, therefore, be regarded as free from all political bias and as dealing objectively with war-incidents in so far as they constitute the arena in which Fr. Doyle's spiritual activities were finally displayed.[4]

(1.) THE GREAT ADVENTURE

"I used to discuss with my brother," says S. Teresa,[5] "how we could become martyrs. We made up our minds to start together, begging our way for the love of God, to the country of the Moors, so that we might be beheaded there." The youthful crusaders were, however, ignominiously brought back to Avila by their uncle; but the spirit of this great adventure remained. Rodrigo died as a captain in the conquest of La Plata; Teresa learnt that *pati* was harder than *mori*. He whose life we are here chronicling had a double answer to his childish ambition for martyrdom, Teresa's life and Rodrigo's death. "Did I ever tell you," he asked in an intimate letter, 5th November, 1914, "did I ever tell you that even as a child I was convinced that one day God would give me the grace of martyrdom? When quite small I read and re-read every martyr's life in the twelve volumes of Butler's Lives of the Saints, and longed and prayed to be a martyr, and I have often done so ever since. As years went on, the desire grew in intensity, and even now the sufferings of the martyrs, their pictures, and everything connected with their death, have a strange fascination for me and help me much. When I was ordained I begged for the foreign missions, never doubting that my

[4] When Fr. Doyle speaks of "a villainous enemy airman" (p. 468 f. below), the German translator (p. 388), rendering "villainous" by *Schuftig* (*arg* would have been more accurate), remarks: "The only intemperate word; but just imagine the situation!" Pater von Festenberg-Packisch has failed to catch his Irish colleague's playful humour. It is only fair to say that I have deleted the war-epithets for the Germans. Fr. Doyle himself assured me that he merely used them conventionally without any unjust connotation.

[5] *Life* i. 4.

request would be granted. But it was not to be, and never can be now; and I was left wondering why God should have put that intense longing into my heart when He did not mean to gratify it. Then slowly light came. He did ask martyrdom, but not in the way I thought, a martyrdom far longer and a thousand times more painful and crucifying, a living martyrdom and a ceaseless crucifixion. So strong and clear is this light, especially recently, that I never pray now: 'Lord, what will You have me do?' but, 'Lord, help me to do what I know You wish.' Yes, Jesus is right when He says: 'I have told him over and over again what I want, but *he will not give it to Me.*' That is what is breaking my heart, as I feel it is breaking His, the pleading for a life of absolute annihilation, and at times what I can only call my powerlessness to give it; want of love, of generosity, is there, I know, but these words do not really express my state. If He does mean me to lead the life which is sketched out in my mind, then I can understand why He lets me feel my utter misery and powerlessness, so that I may see clearly that it must be all the work of His grace. Jesus is very gentle but very firm with me. For some years past He has shown me that I must not shrink from what He asks. He is ever beside me urging me in the same direction—you know where His divine Face was turned so constantly during life and at its close. I am not afraid of sacrifice; He has given me an intense love of suffering and humiliation. But why, oh! why did He make me so wretchedly weak that I cannot take one step if His strong arm is not around me?"

Still he did not abandon the hope of laying down his life for Christ. Four days later he says in another letter: "What I am going to tell you now may pain you. I have volunteered for the Front as Military Chaplain, though perhaps I may never be sent. Naturally I have little attraction for the hardship and suffering the life would mean; but it is a glorious chance of making the 'ould body' bear something for Christ's dear sake. However, what decided me in the end was a thought that flashed into my mind when in the

chapel: the thought that if I get killed I shall die a martyr of charity and so the longing of my heart will be gratified. This much my offering myself as chaplain has done for me: it has made me realise that my life may be very short and that I must do all I can for Jesus now."

A similar thought occurs in his private diary under next day's date, (10th November, 1914): "My offering myself as war chaplain to the Provincial has had a wonderful effect on me. I long to go and shed my blood for Jesus and, if He wills it, to die a martyr of charity. The thought that at any moment I may be called to the Front, perhaps to die, has roused a great desire to do all I can while I have life. I feel great strength to make any sacrifice and little difficulty in doing so. I may not have long now to prove my love for Jesus."

He waited a year before the sacrifice was asked of him. On 15th November, 1915, he makes this brief entry: "Received my appointment from the War Office as chaplain to the 16th Division. *Fiat voluntas Tua.*" "What the future has in store I know not," he writes to a correspondent on the same day; "but I have given Jesus *all* to dispose of as He sees best. My heart is full of gratitude to Him for giving me this chance of being really generous and of leading a life that will be truly crucified." How hard he found this may be gathered from some words written a fortnight later on the eve of his starting for Whitely Camp, Surrey: "A last farewell, for I shall be far away when you receive this. My *via crucis* is nearly over; but only in heaven will you know how I have suffered all this week. It is all for Him and I do not regret it; but He filled my cup of bitterness this evening when I left my darling old Father. Thank God, at last I can say, I have given Him all; or rather He has taken all from me. May His sweet will be done." He seems to have had a premonition of death, as indeed had several who knew his fearless zeal. "I want you to know," he writes on 14th January, 1916, "what I went through by volunteering for the Front. God made me feel with absolute certainty—I suppose to increase

the merit of the offering—that I shall be killed. The struggle was hard, for I did not want to die; not indeed that I am afraid of death, but the thought that I could never again do more for God or suffer for Him in heaven made the sacrifice too bitter for words." In the same strain he writes from Bordon Camp, Hants, a week later to a dear friend who was anxious for him: "He knows what is best for all of us. Would it not be more perfect then not to pray for my safety, but rather that His designs may be carried out? . . . I have only one regret now that death is such a distinct possibility—that I have done so little for our Blessed Lord and His glory. But it consoles me much to remember that one can still make up by a loving generosity for a past which is beyond recall."

A few letters survive to tell us his impressions of camp life. On 15th December, 1915, he writes: "I cannot say I am quite in love with camp life, which in many respects is very repellent. But even in these disagreeable things there is a joy and secret pleasure, since it means all the more merit, and let us hope, a richer harvest of souls. My eyes have been opened still more to the awful godlessness of the world and the need, the immense need, there is for us who owe so much to our Blessed Lord to try and make up to Him for all this by greater love and generosity. It will never equal, I fear, the worldly generosity of these men. For example, this morning a regiment marched out of camp at 5 a. m. in torrents of rain merely for exercise. When they return to-night, they will dry their wet underclothing by sleeping in them!" [6]

On New Year's Day Fr. Doyle with his regiment (8th Royal Irish Fusiliers) moved from Whitely Camp to Bordon Camp. The change was welcome to him for the reason given in the following letter four days later [7]: "Before I thank you for your letter which was doubly welcome in my exile, I want

[6] "This war has made me thoroughly ashamed of myself," he wrote later. "Such generosity, such self-sacrifice and disregard even of life! And we, followers of a crucified King, make our lives a study in comfort. May He forgive us for being such cowards and give us the spirit of heroism."

[7] See also page 241 ff.

to tell you the New Year's gift our Lord gave me. We had an awful time of storm and rain coming over here, but the first thing I saw on reaching the barrack square was a hut marked R.C. Church. I took it for granted that it was just the usual hut set apart for Sunday Mass, but on trying the door you can imagine my delight to find a small but beautifully furnished chapel with a lamp burning before the altar, which made my heart leap with joy.

"I felt as if all the hardships of my life had vanished, for I had found Him again who makes the hard things easy and the bitter things sweet. What did anything matter now since I could go and tell Him all about it and get help and consolation from Jesus. I really think that this month's privation of the Blessed Sacrament has taught me the true value of the Tabernacle. But His goodness did not stop here; the other priest who had the key gave it to me without my even suggesting it, so I can go to Him at any hour of the day or night if I want to—do you think I shall? Is He not good to have put the little chapel where He did, as it might have been in any other part of the camp, miles away? I do not think there is a happier man in England than I to-day. I am writing this, sitting on a piece of wood—no chairs in our quarters. There are about 1,200 Catholics in our brigade now. I get a few 'big fish' each evening."

The reference to soul-fishing will remind us that his life was by no means contemplative at this time, except in so far as he was able to be Martha by day and Mary by night. His work was very arduous and grew more so as the day of departure drew near. It was the last great chance for the soul of many an Irish lad. "There is nothing like the prospect of a German shell," wrote Fr. Doyle, "for putting the fear of God into one; and many an old rooster whom no mission ever moved has been blown out of his nest by the news of our departure." "I cannot help thinking," he adds, "that when the final reckoning day comes, in spite of all the misery and suffering caused, this war will turn out to have been the biggest act of God's love, saving the souls of scores of poor fellows, certainly among my men." "We are having

desperate work these days," he told a friend (14th February, 1916). "The good God is simply pouring out His grace on these poor fellows and reconciling them before they die. It has to be quick work, no time for 'trimmings.' I have positively a pain in my arm giving Absolution and Communions in the morning. I was able to manage Exposition all day last Sunday, which brought in many an erring sheep. I realize that from this on my life will be a martyrdom in a way I never thought of. I have got to love my brave lads almost like my own brothers and sisters. They are so wild and reckless, and at the same time so full of faith and love of God and His Blessed Mother. Yet soon I shall have to see the majority of them blown to bits, torn and mangled out of shape. Our brigade is leaving to-morrow for France. I am waiting till Friday night, so as to get in all the confessions I can. Do pray I may be able to say daily Mass. I shall carry everything necessary on my back, and so many manage the Holy Sacrifice in the train. Whilst here I have given Jesus two things which He often asked, but which I refused through 'prudence and a fear of interfering with important work,'—a very old trick of the devil, which my eyes are open to see now. The first was sometimes to fast strictly all day—once I did a hard day's work ending up with a fifteen miles' march on a cup of tea. The second was to spend the whole night in prayer. Including confessions I was able one night to pass eleven hours with Jesus—telling Him every five minutes I was going after five more."

An entry in his diary, written ten days earlier, lets us see even more clearly that, even now at the outset of a new and unexpected ministry, there was perfect continuity in his spiritual life. "Reading to-day of how Luisa de Carvajal made herself the slave of her two maids,[8] the old desire for this kind of life sprang up again. What would I not give for someone to treat me in this way? I have asked Jesus to do

[8] Lady G. Fullerton, *Life of Luisa de Carvajal* († 1614), 1873, p. 74. It is worth noticing that she left a sealed packet of private papers, with directions that they should be delivered to her Jesuit confessor or burnt; these papers have been used in her published life (p. 304).

it, to accept me as His slave. He seemed to say to me that I must carry out what He puts into my mind. (I have done this by a whole day's absolute fast and by remaining in the chapel from 9 at night till 3 a. m.)

(1) I am to kiss the floor every time I enter, leave, or pass before the Tabernacle.

(2) I am not to ask remedies for small ailments, toothache, etc.

(3) Not to shrink from or relieve small pains.

(4) Absolute abandonment to God's will in all things; to have no will or wish of my own.

(5) To ask Fr. B. to treat me like Luisa Carvajal.

(6) Every night to tell my Master how many aspirations I have gathered up."

Such was Fr. Doyle's preparation for active service.

(2.) EN ROUTE

He received unexpected orders from the General to proceed overseas on Thursday, 17th February. Half an hour before starting he wrote to his father: "I set out to face the future with a certain amount of trepidation. . . . Strange to say, I have not the smallest anxiety about the possible dangers of warfare, not so great for me as for others, but I do dread the horrors of the battlefield which all say no words can picture. Still it is a consolation to know what a comfort the mere presence of a priest is to both officers and men alike. They are one and all going to face their duty with the joy of heart which comes from a clean conscience; many of them had not been to confession for over twenty years." Of the crossing itself he wrote to his father a brief description which indirectly reveals some characteristic traits. One passage may be

quoted: "The moon was surrounded by a magnificent halo or crown, which I promptly bagged for myself. I was fortunately able to get some tea on shore, for though they served us out with lifebelts, nothing in the shape of dinner or rations came along. There were only a few bunks which I left to the other officers, and as there was no place to sleep, except the stoke hole, which I was not having this journey, I picked a comfortable (?) corner on deck and prepared for a snooze, when alas! down came the rain. Providence however came to my rescue: the second engineer passing by very kindly offered me a share of his cabin, and I slept like a top on the settee. He was awfully kind to me, even offering me a share of his bunk, and this morning he had hot coffee and buns ready when I awoke; but as I was hoping to be able to celebrate Mass on shore, I had to postpone that luxury. At present there seems little prospect of either Mass or breakfast, as it is now nine and we have been lying off shore since four this morning. 11.30 a. m. Just landed. Seeing there was no chance for Mass, I rooted up a Chinaman and secured a welcome cup of tea; he brought me also a plate of cold liver and potatoes likewise cold—a dish to tempt one's appetite after a channel crossing!"

After a tiresome day at Havre, the rain never for a moment ceasing, the men entrained for their base. And after twenty-one and a half hours in the train there was a march of twelve miles. "I shall not try to describe that march," writes Fr. Doyle, "but you can gather what it was, with strong big men falling down now and then from sheer exhaustion. Under other circumstances I should not have minded the tramp, but I was near the end of my tether and was carrying a great coat, pack and water-bottle." After about two hours' plodding, an officer seeing Fr. Doyle's exhaustion induced him to get on an artillery limber. It was only when the waggons stopped at 2 a. m., that he discovered he was separated from the infantry and his regiment had gone to its unknown destination; he was lost. After three hours' sleep under a cart, he walked on for a couple of miles and found himself in a good-sized town. Though except for two sandwiches he had

not tasted food for thirty-five hours, he deferred breakfast till he could say Mass. Then finding there were no passenger trains, he boarded a slowly moving goods train and thus, sitting on uncomfortably explosive shells, he was taken a good way on his journey. Finally a Catholic officer whom he chanced to meet motored him to his destination—Amettes, the birthplace of St. Benedict Joseph Labre, to whom, since his college days, he had a special devotion. Fr. Doyle had a comfortable room in the little convent. As he had a bad chill as the result of his three nights' exposure, he was lucky to have come under the kindly care of the good sisters.

On 26th February the men left their comparatively snug quarters and began moving in easy stages towards the trenches. The grim reality of war grew nearer.

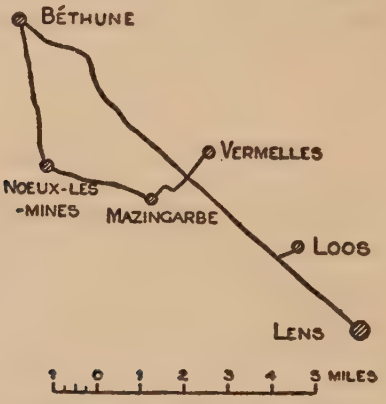
(3.) CURÉ OF MAZINGARBE

"I am suffering much in every way," wrote Fr. Doyle in a private letter on 5th March, 1916, "most of all, perhaps, from sheer fatigue. As regards food and lodging I am not badly off, but the discomforts of the life would be long to tell. However, like S. Paul I can say that I superabound with joy in all my tribulations; for I know that they come from God's hand and that they are working out some plan of His in my soul. What a joy to be able to offer oneself entirely, even life itself, each morning at Mass, and to think that perhaps before evening He may have accepted the offering!" "Though the life is perhaps the very last I would choose humanly speaking," he wrote in another letter (15th March), "I am ever so happy and contented, because I know I am doing what God wants and there is much good work to be done."

It was not long before he had an experience of real danger. On Sunday, 5th March, he said Mass for the 8th Fusiliers, who were stationed at Noeux-les-Mines. After he had finished (about 9 o'clock) he mounted his bicycle in order to go to the 8th Inniskillings, of whom he also had charge, and say Mass

at eleven for them. They were stationed about four miles away near the ruined village of Mazingarbe. Fr. Doyle may be left to describe his adventure in his own words.

"On the way I noticed that heavy firing was going on ahead, but it was only when I reached a bend in the road that I realized the enemy were actually shelling the very spot I had to pass. Some soldiers stopped me, saying it was dangerous to go on. At the moment I was wondering what had become of the side of a vacant house which had suddenly vanished in a cloud of smoke, and I was painfully aware of the proximity of high explosive shells.



NEIGHBOURHOOD OF LOOS.

"Here was a fix! I knew my regiment was waiting in the village for Mass, and also that half of them were going to the trenches that afternoon for the first time; if I did not turn up they would lose Confession and Holy Communion, but the only way to reach them was by the shell-swept road. What really decided me was the thought that I was carrying the Blessed Sacrament, and I felt that, having our Lord Himself with me, no harm could possibly come to me. I mounted the bicycle and faced the music. I don't want you to think me very brave and courageous, for I confess I felt horribly afraid; it was my baptism of fire, and one needs to grow accustomed to the sound of bursting shells.

Just then I was wishing my regiment in Jericho and every German gun at the bottom of the Red Sea or any other hot place.

"Call it a miracle if you will, but the moment I turned the corner the guns ceased firing, and not a shell fell till I was safely in the village Church. My confidence in God's protection was not misplaced. Naturally I did not know this was going to happen, and it was anything but pleasant riding down the last stretch of road, listening for the scream of the coming shell. Have you ever had a nightmare in which you were pursued by ten mad bulls, while the faster you tried to run, the more your feet stuck in the mud? These were just my feelings as I pedalled down that blessed road which seemed to grow longer and longer the further I went.

"At last I turned the corner, reached the Church, and had just begun Mass when down came the hail of shells once more. One or two must have burst very close, judging by the way the walls shook, but I felt quite happy and quite ready to be blown from the altar, for I saw a fine plump Frenchwoman just behind me; she might have been killed, but I was quite safe!

"I mention this little adventure as I think it will console you, as it has consoled me, showing that all the good prayers are not in vain, and that this is a happy omen of God's loving protection from all dangers. I have just heard that one, at least, of the men to whom I gave Holy Communion that morning was killed the same night in the trenches."

The curé being away at the war, Fr. Doyle regarded himself as priest of the parish and was able to act as such on a few occasions. Thus one evening (9th March) he heard quite by chance that an old woman was very ill; he gave her the last Sacraments and she died almost before he got home. "You see my life has many consolations," he adds; "and it is just as well, for this is a sad, sad war of which you at home have but the faintest idea; may the good God end it soon."

This is the description which Fr. Doyle gave of some of his activities on Sunday, 19th March.

"I started at seven in the morning by giving Holy Com-

munion to the men whose Confessions I had heard the previous evening, a goodly number I am glad to say. This was followed by a number of Confessions in French for the townspeople and some French soldiers. I am quite ready to face any language at the present moment. This brought me up to nine, when my men had Mass Parade.

"By chance the whole Regiment were in the village which meant of course that the Church would not hold them, so I had arranged for Mass in the open. The spot I selected was a large courtyard in front of the school—whereby hangs a tale. Armed with the Mayor's permission I approached the schoolmaster for his sanction, and I must say found him most obliging and very gracious, even helping to get things ready. It was only afterwards that I discovered that this man was a red-hot anti-clerical, anti everything that was good in fact, quite a bad lot, so that my request was about the same as asking the Grand Master of the Orange Lodge in Belfast for permission to have Mass in his hall! He was so staggered, I suppose, by my innocent request that he could not find words to refuse. But the good folk of the town are wild with delight and immensely tickled by the idea of Mass in the porch of his school above all people; needless to say, they have rubbed it into him well.

"I had never celebrated Mass in the open before, and I think the men were as much impressed as I was. It was a glorious morning with just a sufficient spice of danger to give the necessary warlike touch to the picture by the presence of a German aeroplane scouting near at hand. I was a wee bit anxious lest a bomb might come down in the middle of the men, but I fancy our unwelcome visitor had quite enough to do, dodging the shells from our guns which kept booming all during Mass; besides I felt confident that for once our guardian angels would do their duty and protect us all till Mass was over.

"When I finished breakfast, I found a big number of men waiting for Confession. I gave them Communion as well, though they were not fasting, as they were going to the

trenches that evening and being in danger of death could receive the Blessed Sacrament as Viaticum. It was the last Communion for many poor fellows who, I trust, are praying for me in Heaven now.

"Having polished off all who came to the Church, I made a raid on the men's billets, and spent a few hours in stables, barns, in fact anywhere, shriving the remainder who gladly availed themselves of the chance of settling up accounts before they started for the front. The harvest, thank God, was good and consoling. Just before they marched at six in the evening, I gave the whole regiment—the Catholics, at least—a General Absolution. So the men went off in the best of spirits, light of heart with the joy of a good conscience. 'Good-bye, Father,' one shouted, 'we are ready to meet the devil himself now'—which I trust he did.

"I dined with the two transport officers who bring up the rations and ammunition to the soldiers, and then mounted my horse and rode up to Headquarters at the communication trenches.

"I have a good old beast of a horse, quiet but with plenty of pace, who simply turns up her nose at a bursting shell with supreme contempt. All went well till suddenly six of our guns, hidden by the roadside, went off with a bang. This was not playing the game, and Flunkibrandos (the horse's name) stopped dead, or rather reversed engines and began to go astern. I tried to think of all the manoeuvres, and was devoutedly wishing I had a bridle tied to her tail, for Flunki backed and backed until she pulled with a bump against a brick wall which the Germans had kindly spared—one of the few, it must be confessed, left in that town; when she sailed ahead again as if nothing had happened. I am bringing home a brick of that wall, for if it had not been there, I certainly should be half away across Germany now."

My work done, I mounted again and made for home. It was rather weird riding past the shattered houses in the dark, with the ping of a stray bullet to make you uncomfortable, while every few minutes a brilliant star-shell would

burst overhead and the guns spat viciously at each other. An officer told me that in the early days of the war our star-shells were a miserable failure, and when at last we got the right thing, the Germans greeted their first appearance with a great cheer; the war has its humorous as well as its tragic side. I reached my billet and tumbled in just as the clock struck midnight."

This of course is the record of a specially strenuous day. But it gives us a good idea of the chaplain's wonderful energy and devotedness. He was proud of the men for whom he worked. "They are really a fine lot of fellows," he wrote on the 31st March from the rest-billets, "and make a good impression on the people wherever they go, more especially here in the North of France, the mining district, where most of the men are too busy washing the dirt out of themselves on Sunday to bother about much else. Hence it is an object lesson to the *parlez-vous* to see the crowds who come to Mass and Communion daily and Benediction in the evening."

His Irish soldiers were mostly simple fellows and their chaplain enjoyed recounting some of their innocent exploits. "Some of them have proved themselves to be Trojans in more things than prayer," he wrote. "For example, the other day one of the Fusiliers, finding himself alone in company with a box containing twelve tins of jam, promptly ate the lot, minus the tins fortunately; since when he has been feeling and looking very much like a jam dumpling." "By the way," he adds, "it is simply marvellous how the enemy get all their information. They knew when my men were going to hold the front trenches, the name of the regiment, etc., sending it all over to our lines the night before, and shouting across the next day to welcome the 'Paddies.' They even went so far as to cease firing on S. Patrick's Day, and invited the Fusiliers to come over and have a drink. One poor fellow at the moment did not want any drink; he had found a jar of rum in a quiet corner of the trench, and had taken a long deep pull before he discovered that it was diluted Condy's fluid. He has taken the pledge for the rest of his mortal life!"

(4.) LOOS

Fr. Doyle was chaplain to half the 49th Brigade, that is, to two regiments (the 8th Royal Irish Fusiliers and Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers), which were billeted four or five miles apart. In order to train the newly arrived men to their work, they were sent to hold the trenches with other troops. Hence one half of each regiment remained behind, while the other was at the firing line. The chaplain's position was, therefore, rather difficult; for he could not be at the dressing station to look after the wounded and at the same time minister to the men at the base. "Up to this," he says, "I stayed behind, as practically nothing can be done in the trenches themselves, while at the rear I had my hands full, with just an odd visit to my absent men to cheer them up in their mud and slush."

But at 6 p.m. on 31st March the whole four regiments of the 49th Brigade left their quarters in Noeux-les-Mines and went forward to the firing line. On this occasion Fr. Doyle accompanied the men. Nearly all had been to Holy Communion that morning or the morning before and they now received General Absolution. The town of Loos was held in a salient and as the road to it was commanded by the German guns, it could be entered only at night. "Single file, no smoking," came the order as the danger zone was reached. After another mile came a second order, "Men will advance by twos, twenty paces apart." Stray bullets were buzzing about, fortunately no shells. Suddenly down the line came the command, "Every man lie flat." The road was being swept by a machine gun. After the leaden hail had stopped, the men moved on again into the town—where the Staff remained—and then out to man the trenches.

That night Fr. Doyle slept for the first time in a dug-out. "I had rather an amusing experience the first night I spent in the trenches," he writes. "On arriving here I found two officers in the dug-out which was intended for me; but as

they were leaving next day I did not care to evict them. After some search I came across an unoccupied glorified rabbit-hole—any port in a storm. It was not too inviting, looking rather damp; but I got a trench board which made a capital foundation for a bed, and spread my sleeping bag over it. Let me say here that I do not recommend a trench board for a bed. It is simply a kind of ladder with flat steps which is laid at the bottom of the trench; but being very narrow it requires great skill to prevent yourself from rolling off during the night. In addition, the sharp edges of the steps have a trick of cutting into your back and ribs making you feel in the morning as if you had been at Donnybrook fair the night before. In spite of it all I slept soundly till I was awakened by feeling a huge rat sitting on my chest. The rats round here beat anything I have ever seen. If I told you they were as big as sheep you would scarcely believe me, so let me say a lamb; in any case this fellow was a whopper, weighing fully seven pounds as I proved afterwards. I thought first of all that 'I had them again'; but as I gradually awoke more fully I felt his weight and could dimly see the black outline. Before I quite realized what was happening a warm soft tongue began to lick my face, and I recognised my old friend—The dog!"

Some further references to this dug-out are not without humour and horror. "When introducing you to my friends the rats," he writes, "I made a serious omission in forgetting another class of most attentive friends, smaller in size but much more active in a close personal way; they are not called *teas,* but something very like that. You must remember that the unwashed German lived in our cellar for months, and, departing, left behind him a large number of small fierce warriors from across the Rhine. Next came the French. There is not much picking on a Frenchman; so it is small wonder that when they in turn departed, their small companions remained in hope of better things to come. Tommy Atkins then appeared and, not to be outdone, left a legacy also. Fortunately these visitors were natives of different countries, speaking different tongues; otherwise, had they been friends and united in policy,

we should have been literally pulled out of bed." In a letter written in the following January he mentions some more gruesome details. "I thought our dug-out in one of the trenches at Loos bad enough. One end of it had been blown in by a big shell, burying two men whom it was impossible to get out; and we lived at the other end. They, poor chaps, were covered with clay, but not deep enough to keep out the smell of decaying bodies—which did not help one's appetite at meal time. Then when your nerves were more jumpy than usual, you could swear you saw the dead man's boot moving as if he were alive."

Next morning, which he notes as the twenty-fifth anniversary of his entrance into the Society, he emerged to view the havoc and ruin of what was once a town. He discovered a tiny wayside chapel of Our Lady of Consolation with the altar still standing; and here amid the inferno of shot and shell he celebrated Mass.

That afternoon he had "the most exciting experience of his whole life.' The doctor and himself set out to visit the Field Ambulance Station at the other end of the town, where the wounded were sent at night from the Regimental Aid Post.[9] Without knowing it they walked along a road by broad daylight in full view of the German trenches and escaped only by a miracle. Fr. Doyle joined some officers in the cellar, who were having a tea party enlivened by a gramophone. "McCormack," says Fr. Doyle, "had just finished the last bars of 'She is far from the land,' which brought back old memories, when suddenly Bertha Krupp opened her mouth in a most unladylike way, let a screech which you could hear in Dublin, and spat a huge shell right into our courtyard. It was a six-inch gun, so the artillery officer who was present said; but I am certain that sixty inches would be nearer the mark. I shall not easily forget the roar as the shell burst only a few feet from where we

[9] The most advanced Red Cross position, where the wounded are first brought in by the battalion stretcher-bearers and where they are cleared by R.A.M.C. men to the Advanced Dressing Station. The chaplains of Irish regiments, where Catholics were so numerous, usually stationed themselves in the Regimental Aid Post.

sat. A moment later there was a deafening crash; a second shell had hit what was left of the upper wall and brought it tumbling down, half smothering us with the dust which came through the open slit which served as window and chimney combined. Not bad shooting so far. The next shot went wide, but did useful work among the stables and out-houses. Then came a fearful dull thud: the walls quivered, I was nearly knocked off my chair by the concussion, while the cup in the officer's hand sitting next me was sent flying—a shell had landed clean on top of our cellar. That was too much for the rats; out they came from hole and corner, scores of them, and scurried for the open; evidently they thought our poor ship was in a bad way. For once I said a fervent prayer for the Germans who had formerly occupied the house. They had done their work well, propping up the cellar roof with huge beams; otherwise we must have all been buried in the ruins. Shell after shell kept raining down, six at least falling on our heads. We were perfectly safe as the battered-in roof and walls on top of our cellar made a natural dug-out; but we all knew that there was just the chance of a shell coming through and possibly smashing the cup and gramophone. It was an exciting half hour, one that none of our party has any great anxiety to repeat for some time at least." "As we went home in the dusk of the evening," he adds, "I came to the conclusion that there are worse places to live in than poor old Ireland and also that I had had quite enough thrills for one day."

It was not to be, however, for still another adventure awaited him. On returning, he found that a dead man had been brought in for burial. "The cemetery, part of a field, was outside the town in the open country, so exposed to shell and rifle fire that it could not be approached by day. As soon as it was dark we carried the poor fellow out on a stretcher, just as he had fallen, and as quietly as we could began to dig the grave. It was weird. We were standing in front of the German trenches on two sides, though a fair distance away, and every now and then a star-shell went up which we felt certain would reveal our presence to the

enemy. I put my ritual in the bottom of my hat and with the aid of an electric torch read the burial service, while the men screened the light with their caps, for a single flash would have turned the machine guns on us. I cannot say if we were seen or not, but all the time bullets came whizzing by, though more than likely stray ones and not aimed at us. Once I had to get the men to lie down as things were rather warm; but somehow *I* felt quite safe, as if the dead soldier's guardian angel was sheltering us from all danger, till the poor dust was laid to rest. It was my first war burial though assuredly not my last. May God rest his soul and comfort those left to mourn him." [10]

The burials soon became more frequent, and Fr. Doyle had many gruesome experiences. Thus a few days later two bodies fell to bits when lifted off the stretcher and he had to shovel the remains of one poor fellow into the grave—a task which taxed his endurance. On 1st April he had a rather vivid experience of the horrors of war:

"Taking a short cut across country to our lines I found myself on the first battle field of Loos, the place where the French had made their attack. For some reason or other this part of the ground has not been cleared, and it remains more or less as it was the morning after the fight. I had to pick my steps, for numbers of unexploded shells, bombs and grenades lay all round. The ground was littered with broken rifles, torn uniforms, packs, etc., just as the men had flung them aside, charging the German trenches. Almost the first thing I saw was a human head torn from the trunk, though there was no sign of the body. The soldiers had been buried on the spot they fell; that is, if you can call burial, hastily throwing a few shovelfuls of clay on the corpses: there was little time, I fancy, for digging graves, and in war time there is not much thought or sentiment for the slain. As I walked along, I wondered had they made certain each man was really dead. One poor fellow had

[10] As a result of this experience Fr. Doyle at once learnt the burial service off by heart.

been buried, surely, before the breath had left his body, for there was every sign of a last struggle and one arm was thrust out from its shroud of clay. A large mound caught my eye. Four pairs of feet were sticking out, one a German, judging by his boots, and three Frenchmen—friend and foe are sleeping their long last sleep in peace together. They were decently covered compared with the next I saw; a handful of earth covered the wasted body, but the legs and arms and head were exposed to view. He seemed quite a young lad, with fair, almost golden, hair. 'An unknown soldier' was all the rough wooden cross over him told me about him; but I thought of the sorrowing mother, far away, thinking of her boy who was 'missing,' and hoping against hope that he might one day come back. Thank God, Heaven one day will reunite them both. I found a shovel near at hand, and after a couple of hours' stiff work was able to cover the bodies decently, so that on earth at least they might rest in peace."

These few weeks in Loos were a time of great strain; but, of course, there were intermissions. After three days and nights in the front trench the men moved back again for three days to a village out of range of rifle fire, though not immune from occasional shells. After this triduum of comparative rest they moved up to the support trench, and then three days later back once more in Loos where sometimes the Fusiliers had to spend nearly a week. "It was a memorable six days for us all," he writes on 16th April, "living day and night literally face to face with death at every moment. When I left my dug-out to go up or down the street, which I had to do scores of times daily, I never knew if I should reach the end of it without being hit by a bullet or a piece of shell; and in the comparative safety of the cellar, at meals or in bed, there was always the pleasant prospect of being blown to bits or buried alive if the shell came in a certain direction. The life was a big strain on the nerves, for it does make one creepy—as happened to myself yesterday—to hear the rattle of shell splinters on the walls on either side of the road, almost to feel the thud of a nice

jagged lump right behind and to see another fragment go hopping off the road a few yards in front. Why, Daniel in the lions' den had a gay time compared to a walk through the main street of Loos." The secret of his confidence can be guessed from the description of the Cross of Loos which he saw on 3rd April. "I had an opportunity, a rare one, thanks to the fog, of examining closely in daylight one of the wonders of the war, the famous Crucifix or Calvary of Loos. This is a very large cross standing on a mound in a most exposed position, the centre of fierce fighting. One of the four trees standing by it has been torn up by a shell, the branches of the others smashed to bits, a tombstone at its feet lies broken in half and the houses on either side are a heap of ruins. But neither cross nor figure has been touched. I looked closely and could not see even one bullet hole. Surely if the Almighty can protect the image of His Son, it will be no great difficulty to guard His priest also, as indeed He has done in a wonderful way."

Fr. Doyle was curé of this parish of trenches, his church being his dug-out situated in the support trench near the doctor's dressing station. He also humorously included innumerable rats, insects and vermin among his parishioners! Of his men he was really proud. "Our poor lads are just grand," he says. "They curse like troopers all the day, they give the Germans hell, purgatory and heaven all combined at night, and next morning come kneeling in the mud for Mass and Holy Communion when they get a chance; and they beam all over with genuine pleasure when their Padre comes past their dug-out or meets them in the trench." It may be added that he was often in the front trench to encourage and bless the rain-sodden, mudstained, weary watchers. On Easter Sunday, 23rd April, he celebrated his first Mass in the trenches. He had quite a congregation, chiefly of officers, as the men were unable to leave their posts. "My church was a bit of a trench," he writes, "the altar a pile of sandbags. Though we had to stand deep in mud, not knowing the moment a sudden call to arms would come, many a fervent prayer went up to heaven that morning."

(5.) A GAS ATTACK

On the evening of Wednesday, 26th April, the Germans began a slight bombardment which was the prelude to a formidable attack. It was Fr. Doyle's first experience of a battle and proved near being his last. Having met an officer who, though only slightly scratched, was badly shaken by an exploding shell, he brought him to his dug-out, tended him and made him sleep in his own bunk. Later on when he himself tried to sleep, he found he could not do so as the night was cold and he had given up his own blanket. His subsequent adventures may be best given in the words of his own vivid narrative.

"About four o'clock the thought struck me that it would be a good thing to walk back to the village to warm myself and say an early Mass for the nuns, who usually have to wait hours for some chaplain to turn up.[11] They have been very kind to me, and I was glad of this chance of doing this little service to them. The village is about two miles behind our trench, in such a position that one can leave cover with perfect safety and walk there across the fields. As I left the trench about 4.45, the sun was just rising. It was a perfect morning with a gentle breeze blowing. Now and against came the crack of a rifle, but all was unusually calm and still: little did I think of the deadly storm about to burst and hurry so many brave men into eternity. I had just reached a point half way between our trenches and the village when I heard behind me the deep boom of a German gun quickly followed by a dozen others. In a moment our gunners replied and before I could well realize what was taking place, the air was alive with shells. At first I thought it was just a bit of the usual 'good morning greeting' and that after ten minutes' artillery 'strafe' all would be quiet once more. But I soon saw this was a serious business, for gun after gun, and battery after battery, was rapidly coming into action, until at

[11] The village here referred to was Mazingarbe.

the lowest number 500 guns were roaring all round me. It was a magnificent if terrifying sight. The ground fairly shook with the roar of the guns, for the 'heavies' now had taken up the challenge, and all round the horizon I could see the clouds of smoke and dust from the bursting shells as both sides kept searching for their opponents' hidden cannon.

"There I stood in the very centre of the battle, the one man of all the thousands engaged who was absolutely safe, for I was away from the trenches, there were no guns or troops near me to draw fire, and though tens of thousands of shells went over my head, not even a splinter fell near me. I felt that the good God had quietly 'dumped' me there till all danger had passed.

"After a while seeing that this heavy shelling meant an attack of some kind, and that soon many a dying man would need my help, I turned round and made my way towards the ambulance station. As I approached the trenches I noticed the smoke from the bursting shells, which was hanging thickly over them and was being driven towards me across the fields. For once, I said to myself, I am going to smell the smoke of a real battle, and I stepped out quite gaily—the next moment I had turned and was running back for my life—the Germans had started a poison gas attack which I had mistaken for shell smoke, and I had walked straight into it!

"After about 20 yards I stopped to see what was to be done, for I knew it was useless to try and escape by running. I saw (assuredly again providentially) that I had struck the extreme edge of the gas and also that the wind was blowing it away to my left. A hundred yards in the opposite direction, and I was safe.

"I must confess for a moment I got a shock, as a gas attack was the very last thing I was thinking about—in fact we thought the Germans had given it up. Fortunately too I had not forgotten the old days of the chemistry room at Ratcliffe College nor Brother Thompson and his 'stink bottles,' so I knew at the first whiff it was chlorine gas and time for this child to make tracks.

"But I was not yet out of the wood. Even as I was con-

gratulating myself on my good fortune, I saw both right and left of where I stood the green wave of a second gas attack rolling towards me like some huge spectre stretching out its ghostly arms. As I saw it coming, my heart went out to God in one fervent act of gratitude for His goodness to me. As probably you know we all carry 'smoke helmets,' slung over our shoulders in a case, to be used against a gas attack. That morning as I was leaving my dugout I threw my helmet aside. I had a fairly long walk before me, the helmet is a bit heavy on a hot day, and as I said, German gas was most unlikely. So I made up my mind to leave it behind. In view of what happened, it may appear imagination now, but a voice seemed to whisper loudly in my ear: 'Take your helmet with you; don't leave without it.' [12] I turned back and slung it over my shoulder. Surely it was the warning voice of my guardian angel, for if I had not done so, you would never have had this letter.

"I wonder can you picture my feelings at this moment? Here was death in its most awful form sweeping down towards me; thank God I had the one thing which could save me, but with a carelessness for which I ought to be scourged, I had never tried the helmet on and did not know if it were in working order. In theory, with the helmet on I was absolutely safe, but it was an anxious moment waiting for the scorching test, and to make things more horrible, I was absolutely alone. But I had the companionship of One Who sustained me in the hour of trial, and kneeling down I took the Pyx from my pocket and received the Blessed Eucharist as Viaticum. I had not a moment to spare, and had my helmet just fixed when I was buried in a thick green fog of poison gas. In a few moments my confidence returned for the helmet worked perfectly and I found I was able to breathe without any ill effects from the gas.

"By the time I got down to the dressing station the guns had ceased fire, the gas blown away, and the sun was shining in a cloudless sky. Already a stream of wounded was com-

[12] On the anniversary of this escape he once more asserted: "Some invisible, almost physical, force turned me back to get my helmet."

Statue of Our Lady of Victories erected at Nœux-les-Mines to the memory of the 16th (Irish) Division.

Imperial War Museum Photograph. *Crown Copyright*

A Street in Loos, 30th September, 1915.

ing in and I soon had my hands full, when an urgent message reached me from the front trench. A poor fellow had been desperately wounded, a bullet had cut him like a knife across the stomach, with results you can best imagine. He was told he had only a few minutes to live, and asked if they could do anything for him. 'I have only one wish before I die,' he answered, 'could you possibly get me Fr. Doyle? I'll go happy then.' It was hard work to reach him, as parts of the communication trench were knee deep in water and thick mud. Then I was misdirected and sent in the wrong direction, but I kept on praying I might be in time, and at last found the dying man still breathing and conscious. The look of joy, which lit up his face when I knelt beside him, was reward enough for the effort I had made. I gave him Absolution and anointed him before he died, but occupied as I was I did not notice that a third gas attack had begun. Before I could get my helmet out and on, I had swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, which did me no serious harm beyond making me feel rather sick and weak.

"As I made my way slowly up the trench, feeling altogether 'a poor thing,' I stumbled across a young officer who had been badly gassed. He had got his helmet on, but was coughing and choking in a terrible way. 'For God's sake,' he cried, 'help me to tear off this helmet—I can't breathe. I'm dying.' I saw if I left him the end would not be far; so catching hold of him, I half carried, half dragged him up the trench to the medical aid post. I shall never forget that ten minutes, it seemed hours. I seemed to have lost all my strength: struggling with him to prevent him killing himself by tearing off his helmet made me forget almost how to breathe through mine. I was almost stifled, though safe from gas, while the perspiration simply poured from my forehead. I could do nothing but pray for help and set my teeth, for if I once let go, he was a dead man. Thank God, we both at last got to the aid post, and I had the happiness of seeing him in the evening out of danger, though naturally still weak.

"Fortunately this last attack was short and light, so that I was able to take off my helmet and after a cup of tea was

all right. The best proof I can give you of this, lies in the fact that I have since put in three of the hardest days' work of my life which I could not possibly have done had I been really gassed, as its first effect is to leave one as helpless as a child."

This last remark was made in order to relieve his father's anxiety. But it was, to say the least, a meagre summary of his heroic work and almost miraculous escape. A year later he lifted the veil somewhat. "I have never told you," he then confessed, "the whole story of that memorable April morning or the repetition of it the following day, or how when I was lying on the stretcher going to 'peg out,' as the doctor believed, God gave me back my strength and energy in a way which was nothing short of a miracle, to help many many a poor fellow to die in peace and perhaps to open the gates of heaven to not a few.

"I had come through the three attacks without ill results, though having been unexpectedly caught by the last one, as I was anointing a dying man and did not see the poisonous fumes coming, I had swallowed some of the gas before I could get my helmet on. It was nothing very serious, but left me rather weak and washy. There was little time to think of that, for wounded and dying were lying all along the trenches, and I was the only priest on that section at the time.

"The fumes had quite blown away, but a good deal of the gas, being of a heavy nature, had sunk down to the bottom of the trench and gathered under the duck-boards or wooden flooring. It was impossible to do one's work with the gas helmet on, and so as I knelt down to absolve or anoint man after man for the greater part of that day, I had to inhale the chlorine fumes till I had nearly enough gas in my poor inside to inflate a German sausage balloon.

"I did not then know that when a man is gassed his *only* chance (and a poor one at that) is to lie perfectly still to give the heart a chance of fighting its foe. In happy ignorance of my real state, I covered mile after mile of those trenches until at last in the evening, when the work was done, I was

able to rejoin my battalion in a village close to the Line.

"It was only then I began to realise that I felt 'rotten bad' as schoolboys say. I remember the doctor, who was a great friend of mine, feeling my pulse and shaking his head as he put me lying in a corner of the shattered house, and then he sat beside me for hours with a kindness I can never forget. He told me afterwards he was sure I was a 'gone coon,' but at the moment I did not care much. Then I fell asleep only to be rudely awakened at four next morning by the crash of guns and the dreaded bugle call 'gas alarm, gas alarm.' The Germans had launched a second attack, fiercer than the first. It did not take long to make up my mind what to do—who would hesitate at such a moment, when the Reaper Death was busy?—and before I reached the trenches I had anointed a number of poor fellows who had struggled back after being gassed and had fallen dying by the roadside.

"The harvest that day was a big one, for there had been bloody fighting all along the Front. Many a man died happy in the thought that the priest's hand had been raised in absolution over his head and the Holy Oils' anointing had given pardon to those senses which he had used to offend the Almighty. It was a long, hard day, a day of heart-rending sights, with the consolation of good work done in spite of the deadly fumes, and I reached my billet wet and muddy, pretty nearly worn out, but *perfectly well* with not the slightest ill effect from what I had gone through, nor have I felt any since. Surely God has been good to me. That was not the first of His many favours, nor has it been the last."

This was written a year later. In his first letter, while concealing the extreme risks he had incurred, he gave his father a brief consoling account of his two days' work amid the ghastly battlefield.

"On paper every man with a helmet was as safe as I was from gas poisoning. But now it is evident many of the men despised the 'old German gas,' some did not bother putting on their helmets, others had torn theirs, and others like myself had thrown them aside or lost them. From

early morning till late at night I worked my way from trench to trench single handed the first day, with three regiments to look after, and could get no help. Many men died before I could reach them; others seemed just to live till I anointed them, and were gone before I passed back. There they lay, scores of them (we lost 800, nearly all from gas) in the bottom of the trench, in every conceivable posture of human agony: the clothes torn off their bodies in a vain effort to breathe; while from end to end of that valley of death came one low unceasing moan from the lips of brave men fighting and struggling for life.

"I don't think you will blame me when I tell you that more than once the words of Absolution stuck in my throat, and the tears splashed down on the patient suffering faces of my poor boys as I leant down to anoint them. One young soldier seized my two hands and covered them with kisses; another looked up and said: 'Oh! Father I can die happy now, sure I'm not afraid of death or anything else since I have seen you." Don't you think, dear father, that the little sacrifice made in coming out here has already been more than repaid, and if you have suffered a little anxiety on my account, you have at least the consolation of knowing that I have, through God's goodness, been able to comfort many a poor fellow and perhaps to open the gates of Heaven for them."

After this terrible experience Fr. Doyle was glad to have a few days' rest at the rear. For the first time in a fortnight he was able to remove his clothes and he slept for thirteen continuous hours in a real bed. He had, as he himself said, 'nearly reached the end of his tether.' For his conduct on the occasion he was mentioned in dispatches.[13] On which he remarks: "I hope that the angels have done their work as well and that I shall get a little corner in their report to Head Quarters above." Fortunately, there is no doubt about the latter point! Not angels only but human souls

[13] His Colonel recommended him for the Military Cross but was told that Fr. Doyle had not been long enough at the Front. So he was presented with the Parchment of Merit of the 49th Brigade.

speeded heavenwards bore tribute to the self-sacrificing zeal of the soldier of Christ.

During the comparative lull which succeeded this attack Fr. Doyle was kept busy by the men, "scraping their kettles," as they expressed it. "I wish mine were half as clean as some of theirs," he adds. Thus on Sunday, 14th May, between 600 and 700 men went to Holy Communion. Once more he eulogizes his little flock. "One cannot help feeling proud of our Irish lads," he writes. "Everyone loves them—the French girls, naturally that goes without saying; the shopkeepers love them for their simplicity in paying about five times the real value of the goods they buy. Monsieur le Curé would hug them each and every one if he could, for he has been simply raking in the coin these days, many a one putting three and five franc notes in the plate, to make up, I suppose, for the trouser buttons of the knowing ones; and surely our Blessed Lord loves them best of all for their simple, unaffected piety which brings crowds of them at all hours of the day to visit Him in the Tabernacle. Need I add that the Padre himself has a warm corner in his heart for his boys, as I think they have for him, judging by their anxiety when the report spread that I had got knocked out in the gas attack. They are as proud as punch to have the chaplain with them in the trenches. It is quite amusing to hear them point out my dug-out to strangers as they go by: 'That's *our* priest,' with a special stress on the our." For which assuredly the Fusiliers had good reason.

What did he himself think of it all? The following little description of another Crucifix will help to show us where his thoughts lay.

"I paid a visit recently to another wonder of the war, the Church of Vermelles. Little remains of it now, for the town has been held in succession by the Germans, French, and ourselves, and every yard of ground was lost and won a dozen times. The church is just a heap of ruins: the roof has been burnt, the tower shot away, while the statues, Stations, etc., are smashed to dust, but hanging still on one of the broken walls is a large crucifix absolutely untouched. The figure

is a beautiful one, a work of art, and the face of our Lord has an expression of sadness such as I have never seen before. The eyes are open, gazing as it were upon the scene of desolation, and though the wall upon which the crucifix hangs is riddled with bullet holes and shell splinters, the image is untouched save for one round bullet hole just through the heart. The whole thing may be only chance, but it is a striking sight, and cannot fail to impress one and bring home the fact that if God is scourging the world as it well deserves, He is not indifferent to the sorrows and sufferings of His children."

A few intimate letters written at this time give us a precious glimpse of his inner life. We are thus enabled to see a little of the inward soul-world, so calm and undisturbed, so perfectly hidden beneath the multifarious activities and cheerful vigour of a military chaplain. He felt that his present life, so repellent to his natural self, was at once the fulfilment and the test of all his previous aspiration for the foreign mission and martyrdom. His experience seemed to him a purifying preparation for some great task, the consummation of all his striving and sacrifice. "Life out here," he writes, "has had one strange effect on me. I feel as if I had been crushed under some great weight, and that the crushing had somehow got rid of much that was bad in me and brought me closer to Jesus. If it should be God's holy will to bring me safe out of this war, life will be too short to thank Him for all the graces He has given me here. I am already dreaming dreams of the big things I shall try to do for Him, but I fancy He wants to crush me still more before I get out of this. I read a passage recently in the letters of Père Liberman which is consoling. He says that he found from long experience that God never filled a soul with an ardent and lasting desire for anything, *e.g.*, love, holiness, etc., without in the end gratifying it. Has He not in the lesser things acted thus with me? You know my desire for the foreign missions because I realized that the privation and hardships of such a life, the separation from all naturally dear to me, would be an immense help to holiness. And here I am a real missioner, if not in the Congo, at least with many of the wants and sufferings and

even greater dangers than I should have found there. The longing for martyrdom God has gratified times without number, for I have had to go into what seemed certain death, gladly making the offering of my poor life, but He did not accept it, so that the 'daily martyrdom' might be repeated. How I thank Him for this keenest of all sufferings, the prospect of death when life is bounding within one, since it makes me a little more like the Saviour shrinking from death in the Garden! Even my anxiety to have more time for prayer has been gratified, because while waiting for one thing or another or going on my rounds, I have many opportunities for a little talk with Him."

"I have seen very clearly since I came out here," he writes in a hurriedly pencilled note on 16th April, "that Jesus wanted to teach me one lesson at least. I think the want of absolute submission to His will has been the cause of much I have suffered. He asked me to make the sacrifice of my life, but I was unwilling. Not indeed that in any sense I fear death—would not heaven be a welcome exchange?—but knowing what I do about the state of the world, the millions to be saved, and how little He is known or loved or thought about, I felt it hard, very hard, to leave all that work there and go to enjoy the happiness of His company. Then, too, my mind is full of plans for His glory; and perhaps more than all, I know well I have not done the work He gave me to do, that is, I have never fully lived the life He has so often asked for and make clearly known to me; I was too ungenerous and cowardly. That life, to put it in a word, was to be one in which I should 'refuse Him no sacrifice He asked.' However grace has won the day. I think I can say with truth that I have now no desire or wish except His. I have told Him He may do just as He pleases with me, and take all, even my life. This has brought great peace and a sense of great security in the midst of danger, since I know I am in His hands. In return He has made me see that without this absolute abandonment to His pleasure, without the breaking of my own will, a life of immolation as His victim is a farce. The 'perfect renunciation' may be easy, but

'without murmur or complaint' is the real test of the true lover."

Seen in its practical outcome of fearless and selfless service, this ideal of a life of immolation can be appreciated even by those who value holiness only by its direct social worth. It was no merely human ideal, however, but rather his constant union with our Lord which gave him strength and consolation. What he especially valued was the privilege of being a living Tabernacle, of always carrying the Blessed Sacrament around with him. This was to Fr. Doyle not only a constant source of consolation, but also enabled him to overcome his natural loathing for the scenes of strife and slaughter around him, and to manifest an amazingly imperturbable courage which he was really far from feeling. "I have been living in the front trenches for the last week," he says in another letter, "in a sea of mud, drenched to the skin with rain and mercilessly peppered with all sorts and conditions of shells. Yet I realize that some strange purifying process is going on in my soul, and that this life is doing much for my sanctification. This much I can say: I hunger and thirst for holiness, and for humiliations and sufferings, which are the short-cut to holiness; though when these things do come, I often pull a long face and try to avoid them. Yet lately I have come to understand as never before that it is only 'through many tribulations' we can hope to enter the Promised Land of sanctity. I think when this was is over (about twenty years hence), I shall become a hermit! I never felt so utterly sick of the world and worldlings. All this bustle and movement has wearied my soul beyond measure. I am longing for solitude, to be alone with Jesus, for He seems to fill every want in my life. All the same as the days go by I thank our Blessed Lord more and more for the grace of getting out here. Not exactly because of the consolation of helping so many poor fellows or because of the merit the hard life must bring with it, but because I feel this experience has influenced my whole future, which I cannot further explain except by saying that God has given me *the* grace of my life since I came.

"Then in addition there is the great privilege and joy of carrying our dear Lord next my heart day and night. Long ago when reading that Pius IX carried the Pyx around his neck,[14] I felt a foolish desire, as it seemed to me, for the same privilege. Little did I think then that the God of holiness would stoop so low as to make me His resting-place. Why this favour alone would be worth going through twenty wars for! I feel ashamed at times that I do not profit more by His nearness, but I know that He makes allowances for weak inconstant nature, and that even when I do not directly think of Him, He is silently working in my soul. Do you not think that Jesus must have done very much for Mary during the nine months she bore Him within her? I feel that He will do much, very much, for me too whilst I carry Him about with me."

Writing on 7th May he lets an intimate correspondent see clearly the source of all his strength and courage. "Sometimes God seems to leave me to my weakness and I tremble with fear," he confesses. "At other times I have so much trust and confidence in His loving protection that I could almost sit down on a bursting shell feeling I could come to no harm. You would laugh, or perhaps cry, if you saw me at this moment sitting on a pile of bricks and rubbish. Shells are bursting some little distance away on three sides and occasionally a piece comes down with an unpleasantly close thud. But what does it matter? Jesus is resting on my heart, and whenever I like I can fold my arms over Him and press Him to that heart which, as He knows, beats with love of Him." [15] With what wonderful literalness does this attitude reproduce the message of our Lord Himself: "I say to you, My friends, Be not afraid of them who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. . . . Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings and

[14] Dumax, *Récits anécdotiques sur Pie IX*, Paris 1860, p. 134; Huguet, *L' esprit de Pie IX.*, Lyons-Paris 1866, p. 8.

[15] He is alluding to the Blessed Sacrament which he was carrying. It was only two days after his superhuman work and miraculous recovery that he wrote in his diary: "Jesus said to me, You must make your life a martyrdom of prayer." Cited above, p. 197–98.

not one of them is forgotten before God? Yea, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows." (*S. Luke* 12. 4.) To which we may surely add the next verse: "Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of man also confess before the angels of God." A guarantee that not one of the unrecorded deeds of Christian heroism "is forgotten before God," and that Fr. Doyle, flitting like an angel of mercy over the gas-stricken field of Loos, got what he calls his little corner in the report to Head Quarters above.

(6.) ANOTHER SPELL AT THE FRONT

The convent of Mazingarbe to which allusion has been made above, did not long survive. "You will be sorry to hear," says Fr. Doyle in his letter of 22nd May, "that I have lost the good nuns and my little chapel. I call it mine, as it was associated with so many stirring events in my life at the front. I was on my way there on the famous Sunday morning when the shells miraculously stopped falling on the road I had to pass. I was going to the same little chapel when the bombardment and gas-attack of April 27th began. And several times I have said Mass at the altar which is now in fragments. A few mornings ago a big shell hit the chapel, burst inside, and literally blew it to bits, not a brick being left standing on another. It was the most complete bit of destruction I have ever seen. I remember the poor nuns telling me that they had become so accustomed to the shelling that they did not bother taking shelter in the cellar. For some reason or other—God's providence over them no doubt—they had gone down to the lower regions this morning, and so they escaped without a scratch. I am very sorry to lose them, for we had become great friends; and more than once they had bound up my wounds, internal ones be it noted, pouring in rolls and coffee hot and strong. I think I never met four pluckier women. Three times they were sent away by the military authorities and as often came back. I should

not be a bit surprised to find them some morning encamped once more on the ruins of their convent."

In the same letter he announced that he had applied for a much needed leave of absence. "I do not think," he says, "I ever looked forward to a holiday with such keenness in my life before." The nerve-racking, ear-splitting, ceaseless warfare; the constant stream of soldiers to be helped, shriven, anointed or buried; the physical discomforts, the rats and the vermin, the intense cold and knee-deep slush succeeded now by the aching glare of the chalk trenches; the poison-gas working on his body, and the nauseating scenes of bloodshed working on his mind; all this, quite apart from his self-imposed martyrdom of prayer and penance, had told severely on Fr. Doyle, though outwardly he was as joyous and gay as ever. His all too short holiday of ten days was soon over, however; and once more he was back in the trenches.

He was hardly back when a new adventure befel him. "It seems right," he tells his Father, "that I should not keep from you this last mark of the good God's wonderful protection which has been so manifest during the past four months."

"I was standing in a trench, quite a long distance from the firing line, a spot almost as safe as Dalkey itself, talking to some of my men, when we heard in the distance the scream of a shell. It was evidently one of those random shots, which Brother Fritz sends along from time to time, as no other came after it. We very soon became painfully aware that our visitor was heading for us, and that if he did not explode in front of our trench, his career would certainly come to an end close behind us. I did not feel uneasy, for I knew we were practically safe from flying fragments which would pass over our heads, but none of us had calculated that this gentleman had made up his mind to drop into the trench itself, a couple of paces from where I stood.

"What really took place in the next ten seconds I cannot say. I was conscious of a terrific explosion and the thud of falling stones and débris. I thought the drums of my ears were split by the crash, and I believe I was knocked

down by the concussion, but when I jumped to my feet I found that the two men who had been standing at my left hand, the side the shell fell, were stretched on the ground dead, though I think I had time to give them absolution and anoint them. The poor fellow on my right was lying badly wounded in the head; but I myself, though a bit stunned and dazed by the suddenness of the whole thing, was absolutely untouched, though covered with dirt and blood.

"My escape was nothing short of a miracle, for a moment before I was standing on the very spot the shell fell and had just moved away a couple of paces. I did not think it was possible for one to be so near a high explosive and not be killed, and even now I cannot account for my marvellous escape. In saying this I am not quite truthful, for I have not a doubt where the saving protection came from. I had made up my mind to consecrate some small hosts at my Mass the following morning and put them in my Pyx as usual, but as I walked through the little village on my way to the trenches, the thought came to me that with so much danger about, it would be well to have our Blessed Lord's company and protection. I went into the church, opened the Tabernacle, and with the Sacred Host resting on my heart set out confidently to face whatever lay before me; little did I think I was to be so near death or how much depended on that simple action. That is the explanation of the whole affair; I trusted Him and I believe He just allowed this to happen on the very first day I got back to make me trust Him all the more and have greater confidence in His loving protection."

Even the week's rest in billets, though a change from life in the trenches, meant no cessation of work or risk. It was a busy time for the chaplain, as the men availed of the opportunity for Confession and Holy Communion. Even here, well behind the firing line, danger was not absent, for the German long range guns often sent unwelcome visitors. "One shell hit this house," he complained, "came slick through the brick wall into my poor bedroom of all places, very shabby I call it, missed my bed by just an inch, took

a dive through the floor into the room below, and having amused itself with the furniture, coolly walked out through the opposite wall without condescending to burst, in indignation, I suppose, because I was not there. No one was hurt and not much harm done. I have put the head of my bed in the hole in the wall, for it is a point of honour among shells not to come twice through the same spot, and in consequence I sleep securely." "With all these prayers going on," he added to reassure those at home, "a fellow has no chance of getting hit; it's not fair, I think!"

At any rate, it was not Fr. Doyle's fault that he was not hit, for when there was question of ministering to his men, he was absolutely heedless of danger. Further proof of this is unnecessary, but one or two more instances occurring at this time (July, 1916) may be recorded. He wanted to go quickly to a certain village which his men were holding. The journey by "the underground," otherwise "trench street," would take a couple of hours, whereas a quarter of an hour's cycle ride over the high road would bring him to the village. The road, however, was in full view of the German trenches which were quite near, and no one ever ventured along it in daylight. Fr. Doyle was the exception. He cycled the whole way without one bullet being fired. Moreover he had to slacken speed several times in order to avoid the shell holes with which the road was pitted, and he had to dismount once to pick up his bicycle pump which had been jerked off. "Judging by some remarks which have reached me since," he concludes, "people cannot make up their minds whether I am a hero or a fool—I vote for the second. But then they cannot understand what the salvation of even one soul means to a priest. So I just laugh and go my way, happy in the thought that I was in time." This diversity of judgement is just as applicable to Fr. Doyle's life as a whole. Was he a hero or a fool? That is because we forget the possibility of his being both.

"My second adventure, if I may so style it, (says Fr. Doyle) was of a different kind. Preparations had been made for the blowing up of a gigantic mine sunk under the German

trenches, while at the same time our men were to make a raid or night attack on the enemy. The hour fixed was eleven o'clock, so shortly after ten I made my way up to the firing line, where the attacking party were waiting. They were grouped in two bodies, one on either side of the mine, waiting for the explosion to rush over the parapet and seize the newly formed mine-crater.

"As I came along the trench I could hear the men whisper, 'Here's the priest,' while the faces which a moment before had been marked with the awful strain of the waiting lit up with pleasure. As I gave the absolution and the blessing of God on their work, I could not help thinking how many a poor fellow would soon be stretched lifeless a few paces from where he stood; and though I ought to be hardened by this time, I found it difficult to choke down the sadness which filled my heart. 'God bless you, Father, we're ready now,' was reward enough for facing the danger, since every man realized that each moment was full of dreadful possibilities.

"It was well known that the Germans were counter-mining, and if they got wind of our intention would certainly try and explode their mine before ours. It was uncanny walking along, knowing that at any moment you might find yourself sailing skywards, wafted by the gentle breath of four or five tons of explosive. Fortunately nothing happened, but the moments were running out, so I hurried down the communication trench to the dressing station in a dug-out about a hundred yards away, where I intended waiting for the wounded to be brought in.

"On the stroke of eleven I climbed up the parapet out of the trench, and as I did there was a mighty roar in the bowels of the earth, the ground trembled and rocked and quivered, and then a huge column of clay and stones was shot hundreds of feet in the air. As the earth opened dense clouds of smoke and flames burst out, an awful and never to be forgotten sight. God help the poor fellows, even though they be our enemies, who were caught in that inferno and buried alive or blown to bits.

"For a second there was a lull, and then it seemed as

if hell were let loose. Our artillery in the rear were standing ready, waiting for the signal; the moment the roar of the explosion was heard every gun opened fire with a deafening crash. Already our men were over the parapet with a yell which must have terrified the enemy, up the side of the crater, and were digging themselves in for their lives. Under cover of our guns the raiding party had raced for the enemy's trench, fought their way in and out again, as our object was not to gain ground."

At this stage, the German guns having come into action, Fr. Doyle retired to the dug-out and was soon busy with the wounded and dying. "It was nearly four," he concludes, "when I got back to my cellar, tired enough I must confess, and sad at heart after the scenes I had just witnessed; but happy and thankful to God that I had the chance of speeding many a brave fellow on his way to eternity."

On this occasion, as on others, he was able to show kindness to a prisoner. "One German prisoner slightly wounded in a couple of places was carried in," he writes. "Poor beggar, he was certain his last hour had come. He was only a young lad and his teeth chattered with fear. I tried to get him to take a drink; but he pushed it away, thinking, I suppose, it was poison. My knowledge of German is limited to *der Hund;* but a repetition of this word only increased his terror and convinced him we had sent for the dogs of war to tear him to pieces. By degrees I calmed him down, and with the help of a few French, Flemish and Latin words, found out that he was a Bavarian and a Catholic. I gave him a rosary which he devoutly kissed and hung round his neck. Then, evidently reassured that no harm would come to him with a priest by his side, he fell asleep. Next morning he asked to see the 'Pastor' and seemed anxious to thank me for the little I had been able to do for him." It was by no means the only occasion on which this true minister of Christ practised that brotherhood and love of which war seems to be the cruel negation. More than once too he preached (in rather strong terms) to his men on their obligation to respect the lives of prisoners.

Still another adventure. "August 15th has always been a day of many graces for me," writes Fr. Doyle. "It is the anniversary of my consecration to Mary and of my vows in the Society; it was very nearly making me surpass our Lady herself by sending me higher up than she ever got in her life." The men were out of the trenches, staying in the village of Mazingarbe. On the afternoon of 15th August, 1916, most of the men were engaged in athletic sports in a field outside when the Germans began shelling the town. Needless to say, Fr. Doyle at once started for the scene of danger.

"Knowing there were a good number of my boys about (he writes) I hurried back as quickly as I could, and made my way up the long, narrow street. The shells were all coming in one direction, across the read, not down it, so that by keeping close to the houses on the shady side there was little danger, though occasional thrills of excitement enough to satisfy Don Quixote himself. I reached the village cross-roads in time to lift up the poor sentry who had been badly hit, and with the help of a couple of men carried him to the side of the road. He was unconscious, but I gave him absolution and was half way through the anointing when with a scream and a roar which made our hearts jump a shell whizzed over our heads and crashed into the wall directly opposite on the other side of the street, covering us with brick dust and dirt. Bits of shrapnel came thud, thud, on the ground and wall around us, but neither I nor the men were touched.

" 'Begorra, Father, that was a near one, anyhow,' said one of them, as he brushed the dust off his tunic, and started to fill his pipe. 'It was well we had your Reverence with us when Jerry (a nickname for German) sent that one across.' 'You must not thank me, boys,' I said, 'don't you know it is our Lady's feast, and Mary had her mantle spread over us to save us from all harm?' [16] 'True for you, Father,'

[16] Compare what S. John of the Cross said after an escape from falling débris: "She of the white mantle covered me with it."—*Life* by D. Lewis, 1897 [2], p. 208.

Imperial War Museum Photograph. *Crown Copyright.*

A Front Line Trench (showing a look-out post and barbed wire in No-Man's-Land).

Imperial War Museum Photograph. *Crown Copyright.*

Entrance to a Concrete 'Pill Box' or Block-house.

came the answer. But I could see by their faces that they were by no means convinced that I had not worked the miracle.

"Though it was the 15th of August I was taking no risks, especially with this reputation to maintain! So, the poor boy being dead, I bundled the rest of them down a cellar out of harm's way, and started off again. Heavy as the shelling was, little damage was done thanks to the fact that the sports had emptied the town. One man was beyond my aid, a few slightly wounded, and that was all. As I came round the corner of the Church I met four of my boys calmly strolling along in the middle of the street as if they were walking on Kingstown pier. I won't record what I said, but my words helped by the opportune arrival of an unpleasantly near H.E. (high explosive) had the desired effect, and we all took cover in the church. It was only then I realised my mistake, for it soon became evident the Germans were firing at the church itself. One after another the shells came in rapid succession, first on one side then on the other, dropping in front and behind the building, which was a target with its tall, white tower. It was madness to go out, and I do not think the men, some score of them, knew of their danger, nor did I tell them, but 'man of little faith,' as I was, I cast anxious eyes at the roof and wished it were stronger, even though Mary's mantle was stretched over it; for I thought perhaps there might be a hole in the garment which she had forgotten to patch. All's well that ends well, they say. Not a shot hit the church, though the houses and road got it hot. Our fiery ordeal ended at last, safely and happily for all of us. And August 15th, 1916, went down on my list as another day of special grace and favour at Mary's hands."

Quite apart from these special escapes, Fr. Doyle's ordinary days were filled with thrilling dangers and exhausting toil. "I often congratulate myself," he says, "on my good fortune in being appointed to the Irish Brigade, more especially as the last vacancy fell to me. The vast majority of the chaplains at the Front seldom see anything more dangerous than the shell of an egg of doubtful age. They are doing splendid

work along the lines of communication, in the hospitals, or at the base. Even those who are attached to non-Catholic Divisions have little time to get to the trenches, their men are so scattered; but we with the Irish Regiments live in the thick of it. We share the hardships and dangers with our men, and if we have less polish on our boots and belts than other spruce padres, let us hope we have something more to our bank account in a better world."

Almost before daybreak Fr. Doyle was up and had the happiness of offering the Holy Sacrifice. In August, 1916, he was able to fit up a room in a deserted house and here from time to time he was able to celebrate Mass for the men, "a privilege which the poor fellows appreciate." In one corner were the cellar steps down which, when occasion required, priest and congregation vanished with marvellous celerity. Once a shell came through the wall and fell on the floor without bursting, covering the little altar with bricks and plaster. But when in the trenches he celebrated in his dug-out. The morning was spent in visits to five dressing stations in various parts of the trenches, saying some of his Office, Confessions or chats with the men. "Quite often," he says, "an officer will drop in for a friendly controversial talk, resulting, thank God, in much good. There is no doubt that the faith and sincere piety of our men have made an immense impression on non-Catholics, and have made them anxious to know more about the true Church." "In the afternoon," he continues, "I made a tour of the front line trenches. To be candid, it is part of my work which I do *not* like. We chaplains are not bound to go into the firing line; in fact are not supposed to do so, but the officers welcome us warmly, as a chat and a cheery word bucks the men up so much. It is not that the danger is very great; in fact, I think it is much less than in other parts of the trenches, because the track being built in a zigzag, you are perfectly safe in a 'bay' owing to the walls of clay on either side, unless a shell falls on the very spot where you are standing. But it is the uncanny feeling, which comes over one, knowing

that the enemy in some parts are only thirty yards away, which makes the trip unpleasant. I have often come to a 'bay' blown in shortly before by a shell from a mortar, a little gentleman weighing 200 lbs.; you can see him coming in the air, and when you do, well you slip into the next 'bay' and try to feel as small as you can. I have had to crawl past a gap in the trench, but I can honestly say I have never had anything approaching a near shave. The Lord does not forget His goats when He is minding His sheep!"

Night did not mean rest for Fr. Doyle, for it was then that he usually conducted burials. Moreover as most of the ordinary fighting was done at night it was then that he was most liable to "sick calls." "Often the morning light is breaking," he says, "before I get the chance of lying down. For example, the other night I had to bury one man at 11.30, a second after 2 a.m.; and I had barely turned in when word came that one of my poor boys had his leg shot off in a distant part of the trench. I was directed the wrong way, which added an extra half hour to my walk and a great deal to my anxiety lest the lad should be dead; but, thank God, he was alive when I reached him, a comfort surely to us both."

"Let me introduce you to my house and home," he writes to his Father. "It is nothing very grand, just a hole dug in the side of the trench, the entrance made as small as possible to keep out stray splinters of shell, not to speak of the cool night breezes, for my house does not boast of doors or windows. I am fortunate, however, in that I am just able to stand upright, though at times I forget my surroundings and bang my head against the beams of the roof; at present I have 972 bruises on various parts of my skull, but am hoping to have more later on. The German officer who lived here before my arrival was evidently a man of taste; he put planks on the floor and lined the walls with boards, making it very dry and comfortable, for which I bless the dear man; but it makes my 'appy 'ome look like a respectable packing case. I am living in fear and trembling that some day B. and J. may pay me a visit; they might squeeze in, but they

certainly would never get out again; even I have to be careful about the size and extent of my meals. In one corner is my bed (?), just a couple of planks raised off the ground. not too soft, but welcome as any couch of down to a dead-tired man.

"I am never lonely at nights, for I have many visitors—a stray dog, a trench cat or two who stroll in to say 'bon jour,' and of course my never-failing friends the mice and rats. I never knew till I came out here that rats sing! It is a fact. They have built their nests behind the boards of my mansion walls—which, I may add, does not add to the sweetness of my abode—and many a time I have heard them singing to one another, for ever so long, quite a sweet musical note. From time to time they poke their heads out and look at me, as much as to say, 'You are a queer sort of rat, you are.'"

"The rats and fleas had recently been making things uncommonly lively," he wrote a little later, referring to his period in Loos. "My last dug-out was evidently their council chamber, and they resented my intrusion; they literally danced on me. I woke up the first night to find King Rat calmly sleeping on my feet. Before I quite realised it, he ran along my legs and over my face; a procedure that I do not recommend, as the sensation is quite horrible. I gave one yell, which must have startled the Germans for miles round. Twice the same night I woke up again with one of his wives sitting on my head, which is about the limit, I think. I am not exaggerating or dreaming; for, as I jerked my head, I heard their ladyships go plop against the wall. I hope the King lost a couple of his wives that night; for, without being uncharitable, he seems like King Solomon to have a warm corner in his heart for the ladies. I know our Lord says to turn the other cheek; but I know no text saying we should be walked on by rats." He had other companions too. "We have rats and fleas by the million," he writes, "innumerable flies which eat the jam off your bread before you can get it into your mouth, smells wondrous and varied, not to speak of other unmentionable things." He also alludes to "scratches, many and deep, made by the

loving embraces of the 'Misskitties,' who are absolutely shameless in this part of the world." [17]

Amid all these hardships, to whose severity we must not be blinded by Fr. Doyles humorous descriptions, he was consoled by the thought of how much his presence and ministrations meant to the poor fellows around him. "Though the life at times is rough and hard enough (at least the floor feels so at night) there are many consolations for a priest, not the least of which is the number of converts, both officers and men coming into the Church. Many of them have never been in contact with Catholics before, knew nothing about the grandeur and beauty of our religion, and above all have been immensely impressed by what the Catholic priests, alone of all the chaplains at the Front, are able to do for their men, both living and dying. It is an admitted fact, that the Irish Catholic soldier is the bravest and best man in a fight, but few know that he draws that courage from the strong Faith with which he is filled and the help which comes from the exercise of his religion." Among his own flock, of course, he had a few straying sheep and he has some amusing stories to tell concerning their capture. "One of the men not too famous himself for piety," he writes, "brought in a black sheep to Confession. He was a brawny boy, and I fancy he helped his argument with a little physical force. Seeing a good opportunity for landing another fish, I said to him, 'What about yourself, were you with the priest recently?' 'Oh, Father,' he answered, 'I'm all right, I was at my duty three years ago.' I believe the poor chap was really sincere; but I am glad to say he is 'righter' now."

He was naturally solicitous for his men, especially as the months dragged on with no intermission save a few brief

[17] In the first edition I quoted this extract from Fr. Doyle's letter of 28th June: "All last week there was fearful slaughter in our trenches. In fact I am quite worn out with carrying off the dead and burying them. To save time and trouble I made a big grave behind my dug-out and just pitched in the dead bodies; one gets very callous, I fear, during war." I am afraid I took too literally this elaborate joke so typical of Fr. Doyle. The next sentence, overlooked by me, gives the key. "I was much helped in this by a lady whom you know well, as it was her tins of deadly explosives which laid the enemy low; I have only to say *Keating's* once to make the foe flee."

days spent in reserve amid the ruins of a shattered village behind the lines. It was customary for a division which had been in the line for three months to get back to the base for a month's rest. The other divisions round the Sixteenth went back and returned, but the Irishmen were now six months without relief. "I suppose," writes Fr. Doyle, "it is a compliment to the fighting qualities of the 16th Division, for we are holding the most critical sector of the line; but it is a compliment all of us would willingly forego." "As a matter of fact," he adds, "the very night we handed over a certain portion of the Front to another regiment, the Germans—how did they know of the change?—came over and captured the trenches. So we had to go back again." Still the unfortunate Irishmen could not be kept in the trenches for ever. And on 25th August came the welcome order to move to the rear. Sudden and secret as the order was, the Germans knew all about it and put up a board with the message, "Good-bye, 16th Division, we shall give it hot to the English when they come." The Irish did their work well in Loos; in the six months they did not lose a trench or a yard of ground; and out of the Division of 20,000 over 15,000 men (including, of course, many sick and slightly wounded) had passed through the doctor's hands.

Back through Amiens to the rear away from the sounds and sights of war. These long marches, made more trying by official incompetence, was very exhausting. As usual Fr. Doyle was where his Master would have been, following the Ignatian ideal of *mecum laborare* in the *Kingdom of Christ*. "The Officers, from Captain up," he writes, "have horses; but I prefer to shoulder my pack and foot it with my boys, for I know they like it, and besides I don't see why I should not share a little of their hardship." [18] Incidentally we learn that he had been carrying a young lad's equipment in addition

[18] "I am quite sure that with Tommies, if ever you get a chance of doing something in the way of sharing their privations and dangers when you aren't obliged to, or of showing in practical ways humility and unselfishness, that will endear you to them and give you weight with them more than anything else."—Donald Hankey, *A Student in Arms* (Letter to an Army Chaplain), Second Series, 1917, pp. 168 f.

to his own, all day too without dinner or supper. It is clear that the saints are incorrigibly "imprudent."

(7.) THE SOMME

The men of the 16th Division were under the impression that, after having done so much more than their share, they were making their way steadily towards the place appointed for their well deserved rest. But as a matter of fact many of these brave fellows were never to enjoy that promised time of quiet on this earth, for their road was leading them to the battle field of the Somme.[19] By way of rest they were to be asked to achieve what English regiments had failed to do. They did it; Guillemont and Ginchy were taken; and many an Irish hearth is the poorer and lonelier. "But 'twas a famous victory."

A few months later Fr. Doyle recounts "two stories about our Irish lads at the Somme, which prove once again there are no soldiers in the world like them. They have all the dash and go of the hot-blooded Celtic race, the courage of lions, and that strong deep faith which makes them see the hand of God in everything, even their own death. During the bombardment of Ginchy—the most intense artillery preparation, it is said, of the whole war—one Paddy was seen sitting calmly in a shell hole, smoking his pipe and sewing a button on his trousers, regardless of the fact that bullets and shells were falling like hail all round him! Another lad was half way through a tin of bully beef, when the order came to 'go over the top' and take the town. As he charged up the slope of that awful inferno—I saw it and even now cannot understand how anyone got through alive—he wired into that beef till the last scrap was gone, then flung away the tin, unslung his rifle and bayonet and made for Berlin in track of the fleeing Germans. They are just grand, these brave boys of mine; it would be hard indeed not to love them. One of

[19] On 28th August, 1916, the 16th Division moved south to join the 14th Corps under Lord Cavan on the Somme.

them told me yesterday in great confidence that he was not sixteen yet; and he has already been through a year of hard fighting. No wonder the angry German officer called the 16th Division 'a pack of devils.' "

"The 16th Division weak in numbers as it was, has (declared Fr. Doyle) covered itself with glory. Our boys fought as only Irish lads can do, took, by a splendid dashing charge, two villages which had beaten off all previous attacks, and made an opening for the big things which are sure to follow now. The price was a heavy one, and I am left to mourn the loss of many a good friend and of scores of my poor boys; with just this consolation, that I know my presence was a help and a comfort and every man was well prepared to meet his Maker when he fell." The religious spirit of his own men is shown by the pride and devotion with which they received a beautiful handmade flag, sent by a nun to Fr. Doyle, which arrived the very night they left for the Somme front. "On one side," writes Fr. Doyle, "is a large picture of the Sacred Heart and on the other the name of the Brigade and regiment, with O'Neill's war-cry 'Ave Maria.' The men are immensely proud of it and feel it is a sign of the protection of God and of His Blessed Mother; for of all the twelve Irish regiments in action at the Somme, the 8th Fusiliers had by far the smallest casualties."

The opening sentences of Fr. Doyle's next letter to his father (11th September, 1915) sufficiently indicate the terrible nature of the ordeal which we are about to recount.

"I have been through the most terrible experience of my whole life, in comparison with which all that I have witnessed or suffered since my arrival in France seems of little consequence; a time of such awful horror that I believe if the good God had not helped me powerfully by His grace I could never have endured it. To sum up all in one word, for the past week I have been living literally in hell, amid sights and scenes and dangers enough to test the courage of the bravest; but through it all my confidence and trust in our Blessed Lord's protection never wavered, for I felt that somehow, even if it needed a miracle, He would bring

Map showing the approximate position of the Western Front from the Sea to the Somme during the first half of 1916.

me safe through the furnace of tribulation. I was hit three times, on the last occasion by a piece of shell big enough to have taken off half my leg, but wonderful to relate I did not receive a wound or scratch—there is some advantage, you see, in having a good thick skin! As you can imagine, I am pretty well worn out and exhausted, rather shaken by the terrific strain of those days and nights without any real sleep or repose, with nerves tingling, ever on the jump, like the rest of us; but it is all over now; we are well behind the firing line on our way at last for a good long rest, which report says will be enjoyed close to the sea."

His previous letter had been written from Bray, near Albert, on the river Somme, where there was a huge concentration of French and British forces. Each morning Fr. Doyle said Mass in the open and gave Holy Communion to hundreds of the men. "I wish you could have seen them," he writes, "kneeling there before the whole camp, recollected and prayerful—a grand profession surely of the faith that is in them. More than one non-Catholic was touched by it; and it made many a one, I am sure, turn to God in the hour of need." On the evening of Sunday, 3rd September, just as they were sitting down to dinner, spread on a pile of empty shell boxes, urgent orders reached the 16th Division to march in ten minutes. "There was only time," says Fr. Doyle, "to grab a slice of bread and hack off a piece of meat before rushing to get one's kit." "As luck would have it," he adds, "I had had nothing to eat since the morning and was famished, but there was nothing for it but to tighten one's belt and look happy." There are occasions when even the world can appreciate Jesuit obedience! After a couple of hours' tramp a halt was called and an order came to stock all impedimenta—kits, packs, blankets, etc.,—by the side of the road. Fr. Doyle, it is almost needless to say, held on to his Mass things, though to his great sorrow for five days he was unable to offer the Holy Sacrifice—"the biggest privation of the whole campaign."

The night was spent without covering or blankets, sitting on the ground. Next morning there was a short march over the brow of a hill and down into a valley still nearer to the

front line. It was a great change from the trench life of the past six months, since at Loos for days one never saw a soul overground and all guns were carefully hidden. But here there were scores and hundreds of cannon of all shapes and sizes, standing out boldly in the fields and "roaring as if they had swallowed a dish of uncooked shells." Amid this infernal din and never-ending roar and crash of bursting shells, men and horses moved about as if there were no war. In this valley of death Fr. Doyle's men had their first casualties, and he himself had a very narrow escape which is best described in his own words.

"I was standing about 100 yards away watching a party of my men crossing the valley, when I saw the earth under their feet open and the twenty men disappear in a cloud of smoke, while a column of stones and clay was shot a couple of hundred feet into the air. A big German shell by the merest chance had landed in the middle of the party. I rushed down the slope, getting a most unmerciful 'whack' between the shoulders, probably from a falling stone, as it did not wound me, but it was no time to think of one's safety. I gave them all a General Absolution, scraped the clay from the faces of a couple of buried men who were not wounded, and then anointed as many of the poor lads as I could reach. Two of them had no faces to anoint and others were ten feet under the clay, but a few were living still. By this time half a dozen volunteers had run up and were digging the buried men out. War may be horrible, but it certainly brings out the best side of a man's character; over and over again I have seen men risking their lives to help or save a comrade, and these brave fellows knew the risk they were taking, for when a German shell falls in a certain place, you clear as quickly as you can since several more are pretty certain to land close. It was a case of duty for me, but real courage for them. We dug like demons for our lads' lives and our own, to tell the truth, for every few minutes another 'iron pill' from a Krupp gun would come tearing down the valley, making our very hearts leap into our mouths. More than once we were well sprinkled with clay and stones,

but the cup of cold water promise was well kept, and not one of the party received a scratch. We got three buried men out alive, not much the worse for their trying experience, but so thoroughly had the shell done its work that there was not a single wounded man in the rest of the party; all had gone to a better land. As I walked back I nearly shared the fate of my boys, but somehow escaped again, and pulled out two more lads who were only buried up to the waist and uninjured. Meanwhile the regiment had been ordered back to a safer position on the hill, and we were able to breathe once more."

The men's resting place that night consisted of some open shell holes. "To make matters worse," writes Fr. Doyle "we were posted fifteen yards in front of two batteries of field guns, while on our right a little further off were half a dozen huge sixty-pounders; not once during the whole night did these guns cease firing, making the ground tremble and rock like a small earthquake, till I thought my head would surely crack in two with the ear-splitting crashes. Shells, as one soon learns, have an unpleasant trick of bursting prematurely as they leave the muzzle of the gun. In the next shell hole lay the body of one of our men who had been killed in this way; so the prospect of a night spent in this dangerous position was not a pleasant one. A soldier has to go and stay where he is sent; but to move would have made little difference, for, dodge as you might, you could never get out of the line of fire of the innumerable batteries all round. Many a time have I seen the earth open in front and around me, ploughed up by bits of our own shells, which helped to make things more lively still."

"Rain was falling in torrents as we prepared to go to bed in our shell hole. Seated on a box in the bottom of the hole for protection against our guns, huddled together for warmth, our feet in a pool, we watched the water trickle down the sides and wondered how long it would take to wash us out. I have spent many more pleasant nights in my life, but never a more uncomfortable one; drenched by the falling rain which would persist in running down my neck, ravenous enough

to eat a live German, and so tired and weary that the roar of the guns failed to keep me awake. I could not help thinking of Him who often had not where to lay His head, and it helped me to resemble Him a little. Providence was good to us; for after some time a tarpaulin was found—stolen, I am afraid—which we stretched over our cave; so we baled out the water and settled down for a night of 'Shivery O.' Strange to say, I am not one bit the worse for this trying experience and others like it, nor did I even get a cold."

At last came the expected order to advance at once and hold the front line, the part assigned being Leuze Wood, the scene of much desperate fighting. Fr. Doyle may be left to describe the journey and the scene.

"The first part of our journey lay through a narrow trench, the floor of which consisted of deep thick mud, and the bodies of dead men trodden under foot. It was horrible beyond description, but there was no help for it, and on the half-rotten corpses of our own brave men we marched in silence, every one busy with his own thoughts. I shall spare you gruesome details, but you can picture one's sensations as one felt the ground yield under one's foot, and one sank down through the body of some poor fellow.

"Half an hour of this brought us out on the open into the middle of the battlefield of some days previous. The wounded, at least I hope so, had all been removed, but the dead lay there stiff and stark, with open staring eyes, just as they had fallen. Good God, such a sight! I had tried to prepare myself for this, but all I had read or pictured gave me little idea of the reality. Some lay as if they were sleeping quietly, others had died in agony, or had had the life crushed out of them by mortal fear, while the whole ground, every foot of it, was littered with heads or limbs, or pieces of torn human bodies. In the bottom of one hole lay a British and a German soldier, locked in a deadly embrace, neither had any weapon, but they had fought on to the bitter end. Another couple seemed to have realised that the horrible struggle was none of their making, and that they were both children of the same God; they had died hand-in-hand praying

for and forgiving one another. A third face caught my eye, a tall, strikingly handsome young German, not more, I should say, than eighteen. He lay there calm and peaceful, with a smile on his face, as if he had had a glimpse of Heaven before he died. Ah, if only his poor mother could have seen her boy it would have soothed the pain of her broken heart.

"We pushed on rapidly through that charnel house, for the stench was fearful, till we stumbled across a sunken road. Here the retreating Germans had evidently made a last desperate stand, but had been caught by our artillery fire. The dead lay in piles, the blue grey uniforms broken by many a khaki-clad body. I saw the ruins of what was evidently the dressing station, judging by the number of bandaged men about; but a shell had found them out even here and swept them all into the net of death.

"A halt for a few minutes gave me the opportunity I was waiting for. I hurried along from group to group, and as I did the men fell on their knees to receive absolution. A few words to give them courage, for no man knew if he would return alive. A 'God bless and protect you, boys,' and I passed on to the next company. As I did, a soldier stepped out of the ranks, caught me by the hand, and said: 'I am not a Catholic, sir, but I want to thank you for that beautiful prayer.' The regiments moved on to the wood, while the doctor and I took up our positions in the dressing station to wait for the wounded. This was a dug-out on the hill facing Leuze Wood, and had been in German occupation the previous afternoon.

"To give you an idea of my position. From where I stood the ground sloped down steeply into a narrow valley, while on the opposite hill lay the wood, half of which the Fusiliers were holding, the Germans occupying the rest; the distance across being so short I could easily follow the movements of our men without a glass.

"Fighting was going on all round, so that I was kept busy, but all the time my thoughts and my heart were with my poor boys in the wood opposite. They had reached it safely, but the Germans somehow had worked round the sides

and temporarily cut them off. No food or water could be sent up, while ten slightly wounded men who tried to come back were shot down, one after another. To make matters worse, our own artillery began to shell them, inflicting heavy losses, and though repeated messages were sent back, continued doing so for a long time. It appears the guns had fired so much that they were becoming worn out, making the shells fall 300 yards short.

"Under these circumstances it would be madness to try and reach the wood, but my heart bled for the wounded and dying lying there alone. When dusk came I made up my mind to try and creep through the valley, more especially as the fire had slackened very much, but once again the Providence of God watched over me. As I was setting out I met a sergeant who argued the point with me. 'You can do little good, Father,' he said, 'down there in the wood, and will only run a great risk. Wait till night comes and then we shall be able to bring all the wounded up here. Don't forget that, though we have plenty of officers and to spare, we have only one priest to look after us.' The poor fellow was so much in earnest I decided to wait a little at least. It was well I did so, for shortly afterwards the Germans opened a terrific bombardment and launched a counter-attack on the wood. Some of the Cornwalls, who were holding a corner of the wood, broke and ran, jumping right on top of the Fusiliers. Brave Paddy from the Green Isle stood his ground and rose to the occasion, first shooting the men from Cornwall, and then hunted the Germans with cold steel.

"Meanwhile we on the opposite hill were having a most unpleasant time. A wounded man had reported that the enemy had captured the wood. Communication was broken and Headquarters had no information of what was going on. At that moment an orderly dashed in with the startling news that the Germans were in the valley, and actually climbing our hill. Jerusalem! We non-combatants might easily escape to the rear, but who would protect the wounded? They could not be abandoned. If it were daylight the Red Cross would give us protection, but in the darkness of the night the en-

emy would not think twice about flinging a dozen bombs down the steps of the dug-out. I looked round at the bloodstained walls and shivered. A nice coward, am I not? Thank God, the situation was not quite so bad as reported, our men got the upper hand and drove back the attack, but that half-hour of suspense will live long in my memory."

Unfortunately, Fr. Doyle gives no further details of his experiences except a brief account of Saturday, 9th September. In a subsequent letter (11th October) he described a Mass for the Dead which he celebrated at the Somme, apparently on this Saturday morning. "By cutting a piece out of the side of the trench," he says, "I was just able to stand in front of my tiny altar, a biscuit box supported on two German bayonets. God's angels, no doubt, were hovering overhead, but so were the shells, hundreds of them, and I was a little afraid that when the earth shook with the crash of the guns, the chalice might be overturned. Round about me on every side was the biggest congregation I ever had: behind the altar, on either side, and in front, row after row, sometimes crowding one upon the other, but all quiet and silent, as if they were straining their ears to catch every syllable of that tremendous act of Sacrifice—but every man was dead! Some had lain there for a week and were foul and horrible to look at, with faces black and green. Others had only just fallen, and seemed rather sleeping than dead, but there they lay, for none had time to bury them, brave fellows, every one, friend and foe alike, while I held in my unworthy hands the God of Battles, their Creator and their Judge, and prayed Him to give rest to their souls. Surely that Mass for the Dead, in the midst of, and surrounded by the dead, was an experience not easily to be forgotten."

It was arranged that on the 9th September the 16th Division should storm Ginchy, a strong village against which previous English attacks had failed. The 8th Fusiliers, having lost so many officers, were held in reserve. From seven in the morning till five in the evening the guns played on Ginchy. "Shortly before five," writes Fr. Doyle, "I went up to the hill in front of the town, and was just in time to see our men leap

from their trenches and dart up the slope, only to be met by a storm of bullets from concealed machine guns. It was my first real view of a battle at close quarters, an experience not easily forgotten. Almost simultaneously all our guns, big and little, opened a terrific barrage behind the village, to prevent the enemy bringing up reinforcements, and in half a minute the scene was hidden by the smoke of thousands of bursting shells, British and German. The wild rush of our Irish lads swept the Germans away like chaff. The first line went clean through the village and out the other side, and were it not for the officers, acting under orders, would certainly be in Berlin by this time! Meanwhile the supports had cleared the cellars and dug-outs of their defenders; the town was ours and all was well. At the same time a feeling of uneasiness was about. Rumour said some other part of the line had failed to advance, the Germans were breaking through, etc. One thing was certain, the guns had not ceased. Something was not going well."

About nine o'clock the Fusiliers were getting ready to be relieved by another regiment. But one further experience was to be theirs. There came an urgent order to hurry up to the Front. "To my dying day," says Fr. Doyle, "I shall never forget that half-hour, as we pushed across the open, our only light the flash of bursting shells, tripping over barbed wire, stumbling and walking on the dead, expecting every moment to be blown into Eternity. We were halted in a trench at the rear of the village, and there till four in the morning we lay on the ground listening to the roar of the guns and the scream of the shells flying overhead, not knowing if the next moment might not be our last. Fortunately, we were not called upon to attack, and our casualties were very slight. But probably because the terrible strain of the past week was beginning to tell, or the Lord wished to give me a little merit by suffering more, the agony and fear and suspense of those six hours seemed to surpass the whole of the seven days.

"We were relieved on Sunday morning, 10th, at four o'clock, and crawled back (I can use no other word) to the camp in

the rear. My feet, perhaps, are the most painful of all, as we were not allowed to remove our boots even at night. But otherwise I am really well, thank God, and a few days' good rest will make me better than ever. At present we march one day and rest the next, but I do not know where."

"Life in the army," writes Fr. Doyle to his Father on 23rd September, "is a life of delightful and unexpected surprises. You are told that you are going to some large town; and at once visions of comfortable quarters, with perhaps the luxury of a real bed, loom up before you; you reach the town, only to find that you do not stay there, have to tramp out into the open country and fight for a corner in some ancient barn. You hear that this journey is to be done by rail; but nothing is said about ten miles' march before and after reaching the stations. While the crowning joy of all is to count on a month's rest and then find yourself back in the trenches within a week. All these pleasant surprises have been mine recently."

"We had a few very pleasant days in the place I last wrote from, a delightful spot on the banks of a wooded river. But since then we have been on the move by rail and motor lorries and 'Shank's mare,' till we found ourselves in Normandy, where the boys had the time of their lives among the apple orchards. On once more, over the frontier into a country not unknown to both of us; and there we have settled down to work again, but in almost the quietest part of the line, a striking contrast to our stirring times at Loos."

Thus once more the men of the 16th Division were defrauded of their month's rest so long overdue; they were thankful at least to have a quiet section of the line in Belgium. "If Loos was hell," says Fr. Doyle, "this is heaven. To begin with, there is scarcely any shelling even on the front line, with the result that for days we have not a single casualty. Then the country is extremely pretty, well wooded and undulating; so that even close up to the firing line one can walk about in the fields with perfect safety. This sense of security and freedom, with green hedges and trees all around, makes life quite a different thing. At Loos, and more so at the Somme, scarce a vestige of vegetation remains. Long ago every leaf and twig

was torn from the trees by the rush of the passing shells, the wind of which would carry you off your feet. What once were woods are now a few gaunt naked poles still standing in the midst of smashed boughs and splintered trees, while the smoke and poisonous vapours from millions of shells have killed and blasted the grass and shrubs, the result being a vast arid plain of desolation. You can therefore imagine our relief to find ourselves walking through green fields and along hedgerows covered with blackberries, trying to persuade ourselves that a war is really going on and that the enemy is just beyond the neighbouring hill." "On Sundays," he continues, "I am able to gather a good number of the men together for Mass, under cover of the trees, as there is danger otherwise of a bomb or two from a passing enemy aeroplane. I need not tell you what a pleasure it is for them." Here, in this relatively quiet corner of Belgium, Fr. Doyle went through the ordinary chaplain's work until early in November when he was able to come home on a week's leave of absence.[20]

(8.) CHRISTMAS AT THE FRONT

All through this terrible time Fr. Doyle's inner life was the same continuous persevering effort at self-conquest, immolation and union. Some of his thoughts and resolutions he, luckily for us, scribbled down in his little notebook. On 10th August he records that he is constantly irritated by the ceaseless annoyances and inconveniences of his life. "For the past couple of days," he records on 10th August, 1916, "I have been very unhappy, in bad humour, with peace of soul quite gone, owing to certain arrangements about billets, etc., which I dislike. This has come from fighting against God's will. I know He wants me to take every single detail of my life as coming from His hand; and I cannot bring myself to submit. I get iritated and annoyed over trifles, *e.g.*, the server ringing the bell at Mass too long, my men coming into my room in

[20] His dug-out at this time was near Kemmel. Cf. reference on page 244.

the morning for my boots, etc., etc. I feel Jesus urges me to these things: (1) to take every single detail of my life as done by Him; (2) lovingly to accept it all in the spirit of immolation that my will and wishes may be annihilated; (3) never to complain or grumble even to myself; (4) to try and let everyone do with me as he pleases, looking on myself as a slave to be trampled on." "If I kept these rules," he added, "I should never be annoyed or upset about anything and should never lose my peace of soul." Less than a week after his fearful experience at the Somme—surely sufficient to justify a long respite from strain and suffering—we find this entry (15th September): "Again I felt most strongly urged to make the 50,000 aspirations *the* penance of my life, and to force myself, no matter at what cost, to get through them daily." A month later he made another effort to add to the inevitable hardships of his life by renewing his resolution to bear "little sufferings" without relief. And on his return from his short much-needed visit home, he reproached himself thus: "While away on leave I deliberately resisted the urging of the Holy Spirit to do many hard things, *e.g.* to rise early and get all the Masses I could, make the Holy Hour, etc. I did none of these things and in consequence was very unhappy. I never have peace unless I am going against myself. I notice a continual interior urging to resume the marking of 'hard things,' because when I give up doing so the acts almost cease." On 13th December he reverts to this thought in the following record: "Since I became chaplain I have grown very lazy and unmortified, the cause of much unhappiness and remorse to me. My excuse is that my present life is so hard and repugnant that I need these little indulgences. Then I think of Blessed Charles Spinola, for example, amid the horrors of his prison, practising great austerities, fasting, etc., which make me ashamed of my cowardice.[21] The Holy Spirit is constantly urging me not to let this precious time slip by, when even a

[21] Blessed Charles Spinola, S.J., martyred in Japan in 1622, was for four years imprisoned in a cage with about 32 other Christians, suffering agonies of starvation and filth. Yet he daily disciplined himself, wore a hairshirt, distributed the few delicacies which were smuggled in to him.—Broeckaert, *Vie du B. Charles Spinola,* Brussels, 1868, pp, 157, 169 f.

small sacrifice is worth many a big one at other times. I see the only chance is to mark down the special acts I do, for though I hate doing so, I know it is an immense help, and otherwise nothing is done. I have begun the 'Book of Little Sacrifices' again to-day."

Another entry, made ten days later, may be quoted to show how difficult he really found that affability and calmness which others remarked in him: "I was very much annoyed because someone burnt the floor of my dug-out and also on finding my candles had been taken. On arriving at Locre I found a second bed in my room and heard that X was coming. This upset and worried me terribly till I realized that all these things were God's doing and that He wished to annihilate my will, so that I should never feel even the smallest interior disturbance no matter what might happen. I have secretly given permission to everyone to treat me as he wishes and to trample on me; why then should I not try and live up to this life?" A similar record made on the Feast of All Saints consolingly illustrates Fr. Doyle's difficulty in overcoming his naturally quick temper: "This evening I had a dispute with Fr. B. Instead of giving in to his wishes and allowing him to remain in the dug-out, I lost my temper and said bitter things. This has humbled me very much, showing me how far I am from having the meek spirit of Christ and my unwillingness to be 'walked on.' Jesus insists on these things: (1) that I must let Him do whatever He likes with me, without even an interior complaint; (2) that I must give myself up absolutely into the hands of everybody to be trampled on; this means that, as far as possible, I must always do their will instead of my own; (3) that no matter how unfairly or unjustly I am treated, I must never complain or answer back, but meekly submit in silence; (4) that all criticism of others and of their actions must cease; (5) that I must never speak uncharitably of people nor tell what they may have done. Jesus wishes me to be dirt, a worm, a door-mat, to be kicked and walked on by everybody, so that pride may be stamped out of me."

Some quotations from letters written at this time to a few

intimate friends and relatives will help to give us a further glimpse of that inner life which was naturally not revealed in the letters which he wrote home and destined for private circulation among a circle of acquaintances.

"I am getting to feel that God does not want the sacrifice of my life, and that I shall return safely to do His work. Some time ago I was feeling very depressed because that sacrifice was greater than even you know, when my eyes fell on these words: 'The essence of the act of sacrifice did not consist in the slaying of the victim but in its offering.' That seemed to make me realize that God was satisfied with my willingness to die and that He had granted me my heart's desire to be a martyr, because the mere act of dying would add little to the crown of suffering I have gone through. At the same time I feel, oh! with what joy since it is for Him, that I have still very much to face and that I shall have the happiness of being wounded and shedding my blood for Jesus. I try to crush down the longing and to wish only what He wishes. One word more about self. You have guessed my little secret concerning decorations. I have asked God that I may not receive any. For my dear Father's sake and the pleasure it would give my loved ones at home it would be great happiness to hear I had been honoured. But I have made the sacrifice of this to God, and so though my name has again gone to Head Quarters, nothing has come of it."

As a matter of fact, however, early in January Fr. Doyle was awarded the Military Cross for his bravery at the Somme. For various reasons he disliked this distinction but was glad inasmuch as it gave pleasure to his Father, to whom he thus wrote on 4th January: "I am sorry these rewards are given to chaplains, for surely he would be a poor specimen of the Lord's Anointed who would do his work for such a thing. But seeing that they are going I must say I am really glad because I know it will give pleasure to an 'old soldier' at home, who ought long ago to have had all the medals and distinctions ever conferred." [22]

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[22] The M.C. was subsequently to Fr. Doyle's death presented to his Father.

Fr. Doyle's interests and happiness lay elsewhere. "They have given me the M.C., he said, "but His crosses are far more welcome." "I wonder," he wrote on 7th November, "I wonder is there a happier man in France than I am. Just now Jesus is giving me great joy in tribulation, though conditions of living are about as uncomfortable as even S. Teresa could wish—perpetual rain, oceans of mud, damp, cold and a plague of rats. Yet I feel that all this is a preparation for the future and that God is labouring in my soul for ends I do not clearly see as yet. Sometimes I kneel down with outstretched arms and pray God, if it is a part of His divine plan, to rain down fresh privations and sufferings." "But," he adds with a characteristic touch of whimsical humour, "I stopped when the mud wall of my little hut fell in upon me—that was too much of a good joke!"

The idea that his hard experience was preparatory to some great consummation reappears in the following interesting letter which he addressed to his sister on 19th December. "I want to have a little chat with you," he begins. "But you must promise to keep to yourself what I write to you. Did I ever tell you that my present life was just the one I dreaded most, being from a natural point of view repugnant in every way? So when our Blessed Lord sent me to the Front I felt 'angry' with Him for taking me away from a sphere of work where the possibilities, at least, of doing good were so enormous, and giving me a task others could perform much better. It was only after a time that I began to understand that 'God's ways are not our ways, nor His thoughts our thoughts,' and the meaning of it all began to dawn on me. In the first place my life, especially here in the trenches, has become a real hermit's one, cave and all, a mixture of solitude with a touch of the hardships of a foreign mission. The result has been that God has come into my life in a way He never did before. He has put strange thoughts into my head and given me many lights which I feel have changed my whole outlook upon life. Then I feel, oh, so strongly, that I am going through a kind of noviceship, a sort of spiritual training, for some big work He wants me to do in the future. I feel every

day as if spiritual strength and power were growing in my soul. This thought of being trained or fitted for God's work (if I may use the comparison with all reverence) like St. John the Baptist, has filled me with extraordinary joy and made me delight in a life which could not well be much harder.

"Here I am in a bit of hole in the side of a ditch, so low that I cannot stand upright and have to bend my head and shoulders during Mass—I can tell you my back aches at the end. My only window is the door (without a door) through which the wind blows day and night; and a cold wind it is just now. I was offered a little stove but my 'Novice Master' did not want that luxury, for it never came. My home would be fairly dry if I could keep out the damp mists and persuade the drops of water not to trickle from the roof. As a rule I sleep well, though one is often roused to attend some poor fellow who has been hit. Still it is rather reversing the order of things to be able to get up in the morning to try and get warm; and it is certainly not pleasant to be awakened from sweet dreams by a huge rat burrowing under your pillow or scampering over your face! This has actually happened to me. There is no great luxury in the matter of food, as you may well guess. Recently, owing to someone's carelessness, or possibly because the bag was made to pay toll on the way up to the trenches, my day's rations consisted of half a pot of jam and a piece of cheese!

"Through all this, and much in addition, the one thought ever in my mind is the goodness and love of God in choosing me to lead this life, and thus preparing me without a chance of refusal for the work He wants doing. No amount of reading or meditating could have proved to me so convincingly that a life of privation, suffering and sacrifice, accepted lovingly for the love of Jesus, is a life of great joy, and surely of great graces. You see, therefore, that I have reasons in abundance for being happy, and I am truly so. Hence you ought to be glad that I have been counted worthy to suffer something for our dear Lord, the better to be prepared to do His work. Ask Him, won't you, that I may not lose this golden opportunity, but may profit to the full by the graces

He is giving me. Every loving wish from my heart for a holy and happy Xmas. Let our gift to the divine Babe be the absolute sacrifice of even our desires, so that His Will alone may be done."

One final quotation will be given from an intimate Christmas letter, so that while we are following Fr. Doyle's outward career, so heroic and, at a safe distance, so picturesque, we may not misread the real man within, so hidden and unsuspected and, to most men, so unintelligible.

"I certainly did not think this time twelve months (he writes) that my next Christmas greetings to you would be from a military camp. I cannot help wondering where my good wishes will reach you from when another year has passed. God has given me one grace at least since I came here. I feel absolutely in His Hands and joyous in the thought that no matter what may happen it will be all for His greater glory. Though Christmas Day was miserably wet, the Divine Babe filled my heart with joy at the thought that my life now was a little bit at least more like His. I am learning here better every day that there is no life of happiness like one full of 'hard things' borne for love of God. For some time past I have felt, I know not why, an intense longing for holiness at any price. I wonder what the price is? Do you ever ask God to make me a saint? No use asking for miracles, I suppose! Well, I shall take my revenge by begging holiness for you.

"In some ways I have found life out here much easier than I expected and in other respects a good deal more trying. Still if I get only a little bit of holiness out of it all, will it not be well worth it all? Jesus knows I have only one wish in this world—to love Him and Him alone—for the rest He has *carte blanche* to do as He pleases in my regard. I just leave myself in His loving Hands and so have no anxiety or care, but great peace of soul. I am off now for a fortnight's spell in the trenches, and if it is not to be Saint Teresa's *mori* it will at least be *pati*."

This is not an inappropriate place for inserting an excerpt from a similar letter though it was written some months later

(March, 1917): "Two great lights or graces seem to have come to me as a result of my present life. The first is that God's will is everything to me now. Hence life has become a sweet joy, since I realise I am doing His dear will at every moment of it, and I have no wish but what He wishes. The more that divine will clashes with mine, the happier I am, even when I think I may have to sacrifice my life, because I know I am pleasing Him. True, nature rebels at times, for He has filled me with such a longing to labour for Him, to live and suffer for His dear sake, that the thought of death is very bitter. I can only call it a living martyrdom. But I conquer the feeling by saying this little prayer: 'Take O Lord, and receive my liberty, my health and strength, my limbs, my flesh, my blood, my very life. Do with me just as You wish; I embrace all lovingly—suffering, wounds, death—if only it will glorify You one tiny bit.' That always brings back peace, even when a bullet grazing my head drives home the reality of the offering. The second grace is the realisation of the immense power of prayer—I had almost said it is everything. This urging to a constant life of prayer has been going on for years, but I had a kind of scruple about 'wasting time' in this way. God set these doubts at rest by two messages. The first was when I opened the life of the Little Flower to seek light in the darkness, and read: 'Is not the apostolate of prayer in a certain sense even greater than the apostolate of preaching?'[23] The second came when I made the little pilgrimage to the home of S. Benedict Joseph Labre, to whom I had always a strange devotion, even as a boy. The first of his sayings, written on the wall of the house, that met my eye, was: 'God's work is better done by constant silent prayer than by great activity.' Ever since I have been, as it were, forced to pray by an interior hidden power, in spite of the repugnance I always feel for it. God draws me irresistibly to the Tabernacle, often with great longing and sweetness, but never without a sense of growing interior strength. I have a little system of my own for counting my prayers; to repre-

[23] *Histoire d' une âme*, p. 325; *Letters*, trans. Taylor, 1914², p. 29.

sent it by figures, the 10,000 before the war has grown to 100,000 daily now, with the result that He has entered into my life as He had never done before."

These citations will suffice to demonstrate the perfect continuity of Fr. Doyle's inner life and to preclude the possibility of imagining any discrepancy between the later and the earlier stages of his ministry, however different be the setting.

We must now indicate some of the events and conditions which intervened before the end of the year. Early in December, 1916, Fr. Doyle was changed from the Irish Fusiliers to the 8th Dublins; accordingly he was henceforth attached to the 48th Brigade which was also part of the 16th Division. He was naturally sorry to part with his men, some of whom cried when told that he was leaving. But he was once more among Irishmen and quite close to his old Battalion in the line. Fr. Doyle was not far from the convent of Locre where he had a comfortable week's billet when his six day's spell in the trenches was done. His dug-out merits a passing notice. Fr. Doyle gives a humorous description: "Picture a good respectable deep Irish ditch with plenty of water and mud in the bottom; scrape a fair-sized hole in the bank, cover the top with some sheets of iron, pile sandbags on top; and you have my dwelling. The door serves also as window and lets in not only light and air, but stray cats, rats galore and many creepy crawly beasties, not to mention rain, snow, and at times a breeze which must have been hatched at the North Pole." It was in this dug-out that Fr. F. M. Browne, S.J., met Fr. Doyle on the evening of 23rd December, 1916, when he came up with the 2nd and 9th Dublins who were relieving the 8th Dublins and R. I. Rifles. "During our whole time there," writes Fr. Browne, 'we relieved each other in this way every eight days. I remember how decent Fr. Willie used to be, coming up early on the relief days, before his Battalion came up, in order that I might get away. He knew how I hated it—and I did not hate it *half* as much as he did. We used generally to confess each other before leaving. We were very exact about waiting for each other, so that I do not think the (48th) Brigade was ever without a priest in the line."

The invulnerability of this dug-out became famous. The men used to say, "Little Fr. Doyle's dug-out *can't* be hit!" [24] When ever there was heavy firing, cooks and other non-combatants used to crowd into it. Once when Fr. Doyle hurriedly returned to get something he had forgotten, he found twelve men squeezed into the little dug-out which was hardly big enough to contain four!

Though this interval at the Front was comparatively quiet, it was not altogether devoid of incidents. "I had just finished breakfast," notes Fr. Doyle on 21st December, "when I heard Miss Krupp come singing overhead with that peculiar note which warns you of her proximity. I ran to the door—the running consisted of one step—and saw the explosion at the bottom of the little hill about two hundred yards away. A moment later another scream, and the earth is flying sky-high, this time fifty yards nearer. I waited anxiously for the next shell. Again the range was shorter, the third shell bursting half the distance from the first. And then I realized that at this rate of progression I should very soon have an unwelcome visitor landing at my very door, for my dug-out was in the direct line of fire. There was no time to adopt the Dublin lad's advice when faced with a difficulty and 'send for the polis'; nor was there any use trying to get out of the way, for as likely as not another shell would land in the trench itself, while my dug-out afforded some protection. I knew there was nothing to fear while His powerful protection was over me, and it has never failed me yet. But I confess I shook with fear as another shell came crashing down and the stones and clay rattled in a shower outside and on the roof." "It is a curious thing," he observes, "that I have never had a moment's hesitation nor ever felt fear in going into the greatest danger when duty called and some poor chap needed help. But to sit in cold blood, so to speak, and to wait to be blown to pieces or buried by a crump is an experience

[24] The men used to say "Little Fr. Doyle," the adjective denoting endearment rather than stature—Fr. Doyle was 5 ft. 10 ins. high. General Hickie in March, 1917, ordered the dug-out to be demolished in order to make Fr. Doyle evacuate the dangerous position. See p. 470. His subsequent dug-out became equally famous. See p. 451.

which tests one's nerves to the limit. Thank God, I have been able to conceal my feelings and so to help others to despise the danger, when I was just longing to take to my heels. An officer said to me at the Somme, 'I have often envied you your coolness and cheerfulness in hot corners.' I rather surprised him by saying that my real feeling was abject fear and I often shook like a leaf." That same afternoon another big shell came plump down close to where he was sitting at his lunch. "Three of my lads," he recounts, "came tearing in to my dug-out; they had nearly been sent to glory and felt they were safe with the priest. The poor priest cracks a joke or two, makes them forget their terror, and goes on with his lunch while every morsel sticks in his throat from fear and dread of the next shell. A moment passes, one, two, here it comes; dead silence and anxious faces for a second, and then we all laugh, for it is one of our own shells going over. Five minutes more and we know all danger has passed. It has been a memorable day for me, though only one of many such in the past."

The approach of Christmas meant the arrival of many presents to Fr. Doyle, which needless to say, soon found their way to the Dublins.[25] "L. and W.'s gift of 'smokes,'" he writes, "was a God-send. The parcel arrived in the midst of pelting rain which had been going on all day. I put on my big boots and coat, and trotted—or I should rather say, waded —up to the front line and gave each man a handful. You would not believe how it bucked them up or how welcome that smoke was to the brave fellows, as they stood there in mud and water, soaked through and through, hungry and sleepless. 'Sure, Father, it's little enough to bear for our sins,' is the way the rough lads look at their hardships. Almighty God would be a queer God if He did not forgive and forget whatever they may have done, with such a spirit as this."

"Just now," he writes to his sister, "just now I got from a convent a present of a lovely cake in a large box. It was

[25] According to Captain Healy, Fr. Doyle appeared always with his pockets stuffed with sweets and cigarettes for the men. "Where he got them we could never make out; he had them when we officers hadn't them."

well packed up, but I could feel its softness and see the sugar and almond paste on top. This child had visions of a glorious tea in his dug-out, lasting from six till nine, during which large slices of cake would receive a military burial. The string was cut, the paper unrolled, and lo! there appeared a large piece of fat bacon—no cake! N.B.—The Germans have sent over to know the meaning of the fearful howls they heard in our lines all the morning." His sister-in-law sent him a plum pudding. "As I write," he says on 13th December, "a huge plum pudding, sent by the thoughtful J., has just walked in at the door. A hundred thousand welcomes! The Lord grant that I do not get killed till after Christmas at least; it would be a fearful disaster to leave that treasure behind to be devoured by the holy nuns." A week later he conveys the sad news that "a villain of a rat worked his way into the middle of the pudding and built himself a home there. There was not so much of the plum pudding left after that, but the remainder was all the sweeter."

Christmas itself Fr. Doyle had the good luck of spending in billets. He got permission from General Hickie to have Midnight Mass for his men in the Convent.[26] The chapel was a fine large one, as in pre-war times over three hundred boarders and orphans were resident in the Convent; and by opening folding-doors the refectory was added to the chapel and thus doubled the available room. An hour before Mass every inch of space was filled, even inside the altar rails and in the corridor, while numbers had to remain in the open. Word had in fact gone round about the Mass, and men from other battalions came to hear it, some having walked several miles from another village. Before the Mass there was strenuous Confession-work. "We were kept hard at work hearing Confessions all the evening till nine o'clock," writes Fr. Doyle, "the sort of Confessions you would like, the real serious business, no nonsense and no trimmings. As I was leaving the village church, a big soldier stopped me to know, like our Gardiner Street friend, 'if the Fathers would be *sittin'* any more that night.' He was soon polished off, poor chap, and

[26] St. Anthony's Institute at Locre.

then insisted on escorting me home. He was one of my old boys, and having had a couple of glasses of beer—'It wouldn't scratch the back of your throat, Father, that French stuff'—was in the mood to be complimentary. 'We miss you sorely, Father, in the battalion,' he said, 'we do be always talking about you.' Then in a tone of great confidence: 'Look, Father, there isn't a man who wouldn't give the whole of the world, if he had it, for your little toe! That's the truth.' The poor fellow meant well, but 'the stuff that would not scratch his throat' certainly helped his imagination and eloquence. I reached the Convent a bit tired, intending to have a rest before Mass, but found a string of the boys awaiting my arrival, determined that they at least would not be left out in the cold. I was kept hard at it hearing Confessions till the stroke of twelve and seldom had a more fruitful or consoling couple of hours' work, the love of the little Babe of Bethlehem softening hearts which all the terrors of war had failed to touch."

The Mass itself was a great success and brought consolation and spiritual peace to many a war-weary exile. This is what Fr. Doyle says:

"I sang the Mass, the girl's choir doing the needful. One of the Tommies, from Dolphin's Barn, sang the Adeste beautifully with just a touch of the sweet Dublin accent to remind us of 'home, sweet home,' the whole congregation joining in the chorus. It was a curious contrast: the chapel packed with men and officers, almost strangely quiet and reverent (the nuns were particularly struck by this), praying and singing most devoutly, while the big tears ran down many a rough cheek: outside the cannon boomed and the machine-guns spat out a hail of lead: peace and good will—hatred and bloodshed!

"It was a Midnight Mass none of us will ever forget. A good 500 men came to Holy Communion, so that I was more than rewarded for my work."

On Christmas Day itself all was quiet up at the front line. The Germans hung white flags all along their barbed wire and did not fire a shot all day, neither did the English. For at least one day homage was paid to the Prince of Peace.

Chapter XI

MILITARY CHAPLAIN

(1917)

(1.) WINTER IN THE TRENCHES

FROM a few of his letters despatched about this time we can fill in some details and conditions of his life during the winter of 1916–17. The cold was intense. Fr. Doyle's references thereto are suggestive and eloquent:

"Jan. 27th. Cold!
Jan. 28th. Colder!!
Jan. 29th. More Colder!!!
Jan. 30th. !!!!!!"

Once he apologises for not writing by saying that he could not hold a pencil in his fingers. "Before I have finished dressing in the mornings, not a very long process," he says, "the water in which I had washed is frozen again. One has to be very careful, too, of one's feet, keeping them well rubbed with whale oil, otherwise you would soon find yourself unable to walk, with half a dozen frozen toes. A dug-out is not the warmest of spots just at present; but, even if I felt inclined to growl, I should be ashamed to do so, seeing what the poor men are suffering in the trenches." As a matter of fact, the temperature was, for over a fortnight, many degrees below zero. During this time it took five or six hours of hard labour to dig a grave. "I think the limit was reached," writes Fr. Doyle, "when the wine froze in the chalice at Mass, and a lamp had to be procured to melt it before going on with the Consecration I am thinking it will take fifty lamps to thaw out the poor chaplain!" One would fancy that living mostly in an open hole in the side of a ditch, while the thermometer registered several degrees below zero, would cool even a saint's ardour for suffering. But here is the inexorable entry in his

Father William Doyle, S.J., as Military Chaplain.

diary (1st Feb.): "Constant urging of Jesus to do 'hard things' for Him, things which cost. I shrink from sacrifice, but I know well He wants it and I can never be happy or at peace otherwise. I find I am falling off in the 100,000 aspirations. Have bound myself for a week by vow to make the full number."

The diet was hardly less trying than the weather. He lived chiefly on bread, bully-beef, and tea. This last concoction was rather nauseous. "Don't ask me where the water came from," he protests, "for I certainly am not anxious to learn. The men hold that, if you boil water, you need not bother about its source or how many dead beasties it has washed on its journey. I have had tea of the most wonderful shades of brown and black; but, barring the taste at times, I am not a whit the worse for this mysterious beverage." "My poor orderly," he remarks on 31st July, 1916, "has nearly emptied the well, of course leaving the six dead Germans behind, in his efforts to make enough tea." The bully-beef was bad enough, but the dietary-specialists' substitute was worse. "Pork-and-Beans," he writes on 16th January, 1917, "is quite a standing joke at the front, though not a pleasant one. A committee of food experts, having discovered that lentil beans contain one and a half times more nourishment and flesh-forming properties than a corresponding weight of meat, promptly decided that, from time to time, Tommy should be fed on this delicious product; and thereupon, I am sure, sat down to a roast leg of mutton, to show that, if they were experts, they were by no means faddists. The method of procedure is this: Fill a can with a pound of small beans, on top place a pièce of fat not larger than a shilling, seal up carefully, and wrap in a coloured label on which is printed (and so must be true) the startling intelligence that 'five beans are of more value than a piece of meat'; then allow a pig to rub his sides against the packing case; and, voilà, you have a sustaining dinner ration of Pork and Beans! The first time you sit down to this repast you experience the most frightful temptation to vainglory and pride, as being the equal of the ancient hermits; and then you feel 'orrible empty; so that, even granting that a tin or beans is of greater value than

a rib of beef, we are all ready to vote, and vote solid every time, for the old-fashioned steak."

It was his cook, however, who supplied the chief mortification in the rations. With Fr. Doyle's connivance, his orderly helped him to imitate Luisa de Carvajal.[1] "Lately," he records in his diary on 13th October, 1916, "lately the desire to be trampled on and become the slave of everybody has grown very strong. I have resolved to make myself secretly the slave of my servant and, as far as I can, to submit to his will, *e.g.* to wait till he comes to serve my Mass and not to send for him, never to complain of anything he does, to take my meals in the way he chooses to cook them and at the hours he suggests, to let him arrange my things as he thinks fit, in a word, humbly to let him trample on me as I deserve." So he wrote in a letter dated 26th October: "I am slowly learning the lesson Jesus brought me out here to teach me. The first and greatest is that I must have no will of my own, only His, and this in all things. It is hard to let everyone walk on you, even your own servant; but Jesus asks this and I try to let Him arrange all as He pleases. Result: yesterday I got no dinner, though I foresaw this would be the consequence of this planning." "My genius of an orderly," he wrote on 22nd December, "fried meat and pudding together and, with a smile of triumph on his face, brought both on the same plate to my dug-out. He is a good poor chap, but I would not recommend him as a cook." "I hear Michael, my orderly, hard at work frying onions for my dinner," he writes a few months later. "What a time we are going to have! Now that he has had a good blowing up, I am hoping for great things and that he won't wash my socks again in the water with which he makes my tea." "While we were at Rubrouck," says Fr. Browne, "I rode over one morning to see Fr. Doyle. I found him writing letters, which he interrupted to tell me of Murphy's latest. Pointing to his trench boots he asked me to smell them. They were awful. Murphy, in order to prepare them for polishing, had in the

[1] See above, p. 390. Fr. Doyle did this, in accordance with the Ignatian principle of taking the offensive (p. 183), because naturally he felt so inclined to have his own way.

orthodox way washed them, but in an unorthodox manner he had chosen a cesspool! The result was almost too much for Fr. Willie. When I told him to sack Murphy on the spot, saying that it was getting a bit too much of a good joke, he laughed and said: 'Well, he's a decent poor fellow and he means well; and—well, I can perhaps gain something too.' I must say his patience and restraint made a great impression on me." The inner motive of this virtue is revealed to us once more in this quotation from a letter which Fr. Doyle called "Meditations in a Belgian Ditch." "Here I live, like Diogenes in his tub, sometimes pretty well frozen, especially at night; but as happy as any mortal man can be on this earth; for if human comforts are wanting, the abiding presence of Him, who was born in a stable, makes up for all else and supplies the want of everything. What does it matter if your piece of meat is cold (it always is), or your tea is well smoked and tastes of petrol? What does it matter if your loaf of bread is often sodden with the rain or your rations almost vanish on their way up to the trenches? One can very humbly echo the words of the Master: 'I have meat to eat of which you know not.' "

The old year ended and the new year began with a series of narrow escapes, which augured badly for a long continuance of Fr. Doyle's life. A description of one or two such incidents will enable us not only to estimate his devotion to duty, but also to picture the realities of war even during those intervals for which neither press nor history finds anything to chronicle.

The very day after Christmas, slaughter recommenced with renewed energy. Two little incidents which Fr. Doyle chronicles as having occurred on 26th December may be here given in his own words.

"'On St. Stephen's Day the men were engaged in a football match, when the Germans saw them, sent over a lovely shot at long range, which carried away the goal post—the umpire gave a 'foul'—and bursting in the middle of the men, killed three and wounded seven. The wounded were bandaged up and hurried off to hospital, the dead carried away for burial; and then the ball was kicked off once more, and the game

went on as if nothing had happened. The Germans must have admired the cool pluck of the players, for they did not fire any more. This is just one little incident of the war, showing how little is thought of human life out here; it sounds callous, but there is no room for sentiment in warfare, and I suppose it is better so."

The other incident is of more personal interest.

"I was riding on my bicycle past a waggon when the machine slipped, throwing me between the front and back wheels of the limber. Fortunately, the horses were going very slowly and I was able, how I cannot tell, to roll out before the wheel went over my legs. I have no luck, you see, else I should be home now with a couple of broken legs, not to speak of a crushed head. The only commiseration I received was the remark of some passing officers that 'the Christmas champagne must have been very strong.' "

"Whatever may be said of the birth and life of the old year," he writes on 1st January, "it certainly died in a glorious burst of noise. All last evening, with intervals for refreshment, our gunners were hard at it; 'worrying' the enemy they call it, not caring, of course, whether or not they worry the men of peace who would dearly love a sleep. Then when midnight struck, a tremendous cannonade to usher in the new year. Fritz was strangely quiet, not retaliating, drinking our health, probably, in the depths of his safe dug-out; all except the unfortunate sentries, who had to face the music in the opposite trenches, and kept sending up vérey lights or star shells, to make sure we were not coming over to raid him. It was a fine display of artillery work; but we shall pay for it, of that I am certain, 'we' being the poor infantry holding the trench and not the good gunners."

"I was right," continues Fr. Doyle a little later. "'We *did* pay for our fun; and the particular spot selected for the scourging was the place where I have the honour to live. This morning, again, our guns opened up and the Flying Pig [2]

[2] "Close beside us," writes Fr. Doyle on 21st December, 1916, "we have installed a Flying Pig, and the Germans are searching for his sty. A Flying Pig, let me explain, is the pet name for a huge trench mortar shell, weighing

joined in with gusto. Oh, that someone would slay that beastly pig, make him into sausages or blow him to Dalkey. If not, friend Fritz will soon blow us to kingdom-come.

"Again the Germans were almost silent. Then about one o'clock, just as our artillery had ceased, they gave it back to us; and for two hours and a quarter, they pasted us with shells, till I thought not a man would be left alive to tell the tale. How little the phrase 'we were shelled for two hours' conveys to you? People read in their papers some morning, 'The enemy fiercely attacked our trenches but were driven back again,' and never give a thought to the brave fellows who lie in heaps, mangled and bleeding, nor to the moans of pain, nor to the broken hearts in many a home. Not many at home care much, I fear; otherwise we should hear less of these brave speeches about 'no peace at any price' from men who will never have to fight. If only the world, Allied and German, could see and hear what we see and hear daily, there would soon be a shout for peace at *any* price.[3]

"Words could never convey the pent-up agony—it is the only word to use—of those two hours; waiting, waiting, always waiting for something to happen, without being able to fire even a bullet in return. I do not think the feelings of a condemned man on the scaffold, waiting for the bolt to be drawn, could be much worse. You know your chances of being hit are relatively small, but there is always the chance that you may; and as shell followed shell in quick succession, sometimes two or three together, even the bravest seemed to shrink up as if they were struck and faces grew long and drawn.

"For the moment there was nothing to be done, so I went on with my Office. But all the time I was torn with anxiety for the safety of my poor boys. It seemed to drive all anxiety and fear for my own safety out of my head. Even when one

250 lbs. The first one we sent over landed near two big trees, which were lifted out of the ground, root and branch, and pitched yards away. Fritz does not like the Pig and is thirsting for his blood."

[3] Fr. Doyle in his letters often speaks of the fighting men's universal disgust of the war and longing for peace. "Everyone," he writes on 3rd July, 1916, "except the gentlemen who sit in comfortable armchairs in London, is deadly sick of this long wretched business."

shell burst very near, and the smoke and fumes drifted in through the door of my 'castle,' nearly smothering me, my chief thought was for them and my prayers were for their safety. The prophet of old never called on the good God more earnestly than I did then—Spare, O God, spare Thy people—for, humanly speaking, the casualties were bound to be heavy, as the whole German fire was concentrated on this one spot, evidently with the object of knocking out, I nearly said the Bloody Pig.

"At last I could stand it no longer. I felt I must go round and see what damage had been done, though I knew I should be called if I were really wanted. The fire had slackened considerably, not more than four or five shells coming over each minute. So out I went and started down the trench. I had only taken six paces when I heard the scream of a shell coming right for me.

"Every shell has a special note. You hear some and do not even look up, for you know, by the sound, that they are safe overhead and will burst far away. A second makes you a wee bit anxious for a moment, till you locate its direction and know all is well for you at least. But there is a third kind of note, and when you hear it you don't even stop to think, but dive straight for the first rat hole or gooseberry bush, anything no matter what which might give cover; or, failing that, you dig your nose as deep as you can into the ground and try to feel small. Here, the value of practical experience comes in, and many an old campaigner will save himself where a novice would come to serious harm.

"I flung myself on my face, and, as I did, the ground took a jump and the sky came tumbling down from the crash that followed. I heard myself exclaiming, 'Good Lord, I'm killed,' which was so obviously untrue that I burst out laughing. There is some consolation in the thought that, if you do get hit or buried by a kindly crump,[4] you hear nothing about

[4] Soldiers slang for 4·2 shrapnel. "The men have a regular vocabulary for the various kinds of shells," writes Fr. Doyle (21st Dec., 1916). "Crump is quite a recognized English word now, and, if you roll the 'r' well, expresses perfectly the rending tearing sound of a high explosive."

till someone pulls you out by the legs. So the fact that I heard the crash told me I was safe. I looked up and saw that my unwelcome visitor had fallen two feet from my own door. Had I been five seconds later, I probably would have been converted into a beautiful specimen of a cabbage strainer and at last made really hol(e)y.

"I did *not* go back to see how much of my crockery was left, but sped on, thanking some good souls for their prayers. A few yards further on, a substantial sod of earth—weighing, it seemed to me, a ton and a half, though it was probably less—nearly knocked all the breath out of my body. But that was a trifle, seeing it might have been a similar lump of Rhineland iron. I found three of my boys, who had been sheltering together, wounded, two of them slightly, the third rather badly. He was only a lad, and was moaning in great pain. When I had anointed him, I put my arms round the poor boy; he could not lie down, being hit in the back in several places; and he rested his head on my breast like a little child. It seemed to ease the pain, for he ceased moaning; and possibly he felt safer, for the shells were still bursting around us and he was trembling with fear. We then got him under cover of the dressing station, and I was able to inquire about the rest. Marvellous to relate, not another man had been hit, nor was there a single other casualty at the end of the bombardment, though hundreds of shells had rained down on all sides of us, in fact lead and iron enough to have put half the British army out of action, if only they stood in the right place." "One good result came from this attack," Fr. Doyle observes with satisfaction, "the Pig, the cause of all our trouble, was removed next day; since when we have been left in peace."

"I did not get my work finished till rather late to-night," he notes under the date 4th January, "and as I had to turn out again shortly it was not worth while turning in. Some of my men were to make a raid on the enemy trenches in the early hours of the morning. This is dangerous work and often results in heavy casualties, so I make it a point to go round the line and give each man Absolution before he 'goes

over the top.' It is a hard, anxious time and a big strain waiting for the word to be given, and to know that it is a comfort to them to see the priest come round and that a cheery word bucks them up. . . . All went well with the raid. We should have had more prisoners, only a hot-blooded Irishman is a dangerous customer when he gets behind a bayonet and wants to let daylight through everybody. I got back to my bunk at six and slept like a top till seven. Not too long, you will say; but, if you come out here, you will find all the old-fashioned ideas about food and sleep and wet clothes and the rest of it rapidly vanishing. It is wonderful what you can do with a cup of tea and one hour's sleep in the twenty-four."

Not all his ministry, of course, involved such risks or privations. Before starting a spell in the trenches Fr. Doyle used to endeavour to get as many men as possible to Confession on the previous evening and then to Mass and Holy Communion in the morning. As one battalion was some miles from the other, this meant an early start and ride or walk, through rain, slush and snow or, later, over hard-frozen ground. "I have celebrated Mass in some strange places and under extraordinary conditions," he writes from the trenches on 28th December, "but somehow, I was more than usually impressed this morning. The men had gathered in what was once a small convent. For, with all their faults, their devil-may-care recklessness, they love the Mass and regret when they cannot come. It was a poor, miserable place, cold and wet, the only light being two small candles. Yet they knelt there and prayed as only our own Irish poor can pray, with a fervour and faith which would touch the heart of any unbeliever. They are as shy as children, and men of few words; but I know they are grateful when one tries to be kind to them and warmly appreciate all that is done for their soul's interest." While in the trenches Fr. Doyle was not allowed to have Mass for his men, owing to the danger of having many gathered together near the firing line. So each morning he went back to where the reserve company was stationed, about twenty minutes' walk; which gave those who were free a chance of coming

often to Holy Communion. On 2nd February, however, he was able to offer the Holy Sacrifice in the trenches, his chapel being a dug-out capable of holding ten or a dozen. "But, as my congregation numbered forty-six," he says, "the vacant space was small. How they all managed to squeeze in I cannot say. There was no question of kneeling down; the men simply stood silently and reverently round the little improvised altar of ammunition boxes, 'glad,' as one of them quaintly expressed it, 'to have a say in it.' Surely our Lord must have been glad also, for every one of the forty-six received Holy Communion, and went back to his post happy at heart and strengthened to face the hardships of these days and nights of cold." What a difference the Real Presence made in the ministrations and influence of a Catholic chaplain!

These Irish lads had a simple strong faith and reverence for the priest. That same afternoon (2nd Feb.) as Fr. Doyle was coming back from his round of the front line trench, he found it necessary to get under cover as shelling began. So he crawled into a hole in which six men were already crouching. No one could have been more welcome. "Come in, Father," cried one, "we're safe now, anyhow." On another similar occasion the remark was made, "Isn't the priest of God with us, what more do you want?" The poor fellows fancied that Fr. Doyle was invulnerable; no wonder, when they saw him sauntering coolly around, amid shells and splinters. He was always near to cheer them up when depressed and nervous and to minister to them when wounded. Here is a description of a 'sick-call' in the early hours of 13th January, 1917.

" 'Two men badly wounded in the firing line, Sir.' I was fast asleep, snugly tucked up in my blankets, dreaming a pleasant dream of something hot. One always dreams of lovely, hot things at night in the trenches—sitting at a warm fire at home, or huge piles of food and drink, but always steaming hot. 'You will need to be quick, Father, to find them alive.' By this time I had grasped the fact that someone was calling me, that some poor dying man needed help, that perhaps a soul was in danger. In a few seconds I had

pulled on my big boots—I knew I should want them in the mud and wet—jumped into my water-proof, and darted down the trench.

"It was just 2 a.m., bitterly cold and snowing hard. God help the poor fellows holding the tumbled-in ditch which is called the front line, standing there, wet and more than frozen, hour after hour. But, more than all, God help and strengthen the victims of this war—the wounded soldier, with his torn and bleeding body, lying out in this awful, biting cold, praying for the help that seems so slow in coming.

"The first part of my journey was easy enough, except that the snow made it difficult to keep one's feet; and I began to realise that one cannot run as easily at forty-four as one could at twenty-four. All went well till I reached a certain part of the trench, which rejoices in the attractive name of Suicide Corner, from the fact that the Germans have a machine gun trained on it and, at intervals during the night, pump a shower of lead on the spot in the hope of knocking out some chance passer by. It was just my luck that, as I came near this place, I heard the rat-tat-tat of the beastly gun and the whiz of the passing bullets. It was not a pleasant prospect to run the gauntlet and skip through the bullets. But what priest would hesitate for a second, with two dying men at the end of the trench? I ducked my head and 'chivvied' down that trench. (I do not know what this word means, but I believe it implies terrific speed and breathless excitement.)

"In the dark, and at that distance, I was quite invisible to the German gunner. I think the Old Boy himself was turning the handle that night; but, luckily for me, he was out of practice; the cold, I suppose, upset his aim. Away on my left, as I ran, I could hear, in the stillness of the night, the grinding rat-tat-tat of the machine gun, for all the world as if a hundred German carpenters were driving nails into my coffin; while overhead crack-crack whizz-whizz went the bullets, tearing after one another for fear they would be late. It was a novel experience to have a whole machine gun all to myself. But it is a pleasure I am not particularly anxious to repeat. At the same time, I do not think I was really in very great danger as,

judging by the sound, the leaden shower was going too high.

"The guns make all movement by night very unpleasant. Both sides have any number of them firing all night, from time to time, at fixed points; for example, cross roads, dumps, light railways, etc., everywhere, in fact, where men are likely to be. Yet in spite of the fact that each fires about ten thousand rounds each night and bullets are flying about like mosquitos, it is very rare indeed that anyone is hit, weeks at a time passing without a casualty, and scarcely ever if one takes ordinary precautions.

"The first man was *in extremis* when I reached him. I did all I could for him and commended his soul to the merciful God, as he had only a few moments to live. Then I hurried on to find the other wounded boy. A journey along the Firing Line in the day time is not an easy matter; but in the darkness of the night it baffles description. A star shell gave me light from time to time and then I made good progress, only to end in blackness and a pool or a shell-hole full of mud and water.

"I found the dying lad—he was not much more—so tightly jammed into a corner of the trench that it was almost impossible to get him out. Both legs were smashed, one in two or three places, so his chances of life were small, and there were other injuries as well. What a harrowing picture that scene would have made. A splendid young soldier, married only a month they told me, lying there, pale and motionless in the mud and water, with the life crushed out of him by a cruel shell. The stretcher bearers hard at work binding up as well as they may, his broken limbs; round about, a group of silent Tommies looking on and wondering when will their turn come. Peace, for a moment, seems to have taken possession of the battle-field, not a sound save the deep boom of some far-off gun and the stifled moans of the dying boy, while, as if anxious to hide the scene, nature drops her soft mantle of snow on the living and dead alike.

"Then, while every head is bared, come the solemn words of absolution, '*Ego te absolvo,* I absolve thee from thy sins. Depart Christian soul, and may the Lord Jesus Christ receive thee with a smiling and benign countenance. Amen.' Oh! surely

the gentle Saviour did receive with open arms the brave lad, who had laid down his life for Him, and, as I turned away, I felt happy in the thought that his soul was already safe in that land where 'God will wipe away all sorrow from our eyes, for weeping and mourning shall be no more.' "

This was the message which the Catholic priest brought with him into this arena of brutal strife and cruel bloodshed, the vision of a world of peace. "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and death shall be no more, nor mourning nor crying nor sorrow shall be any more, for the former things are passed away. And He that sat on the throne said, 'Behold I make all things new.' " (*Apoc.* 21. 4.) A new heaven and a new earth, let us hope, after the slaughter of so many guiltless and brave men and the agony of countless widows and orphans. "The cry of them hath entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth." (*Jas.* 5. 4.)

(2.) EASTER IN THE PAS DE CALAIS

Early in March, 1917, Fr. Doyle secured another ten days' leave and was able to pay a short visit—his last—to Ireland. "In resuming this diary after my little holiday," he writes to his father on his return, "I cannot help thinking of the thirteen months which I have spent on active service; a time so full of thrilling incidents, providential escapes from serious injury, and sights and scenes too horrible to dwell on, that I often wonder if they have really taken place, or if it is only part of some strange dream." Though he was destined to endure five months more of this hideously real nightmare, there was for a month or so an appreciable slackening in the intensity and frequency of its horrors and dangers. He has only a skirmish in the air to chronicle, which he does very impartially. We may preface it by quoting one of his few other references to aerial warfare.

"Our airmen," he writes on 8th January, "have very justly earned a big reputation for their skill and daring, but the

'Allyman' [5] can still give them points in cuteness. Time after time I have seen our air-squadrons sailing up and down, looking in vain for some German to devour; and then, the moment they went back to the rear for lunch, over came the cautious German, took all the photos he wanted, noted positions of guns, etc., and returned safely to his lines in peace, without a nasty air-fight in which he generally comes off second-best. This afternoon I saw a clever bit of work. One of our planes was going along on its usual beat, when, literally like a bolt from the blue, a German airman shot down on him from the sky. He had crept up to such a height that even our vigilant observers had not noticed him. Then, fixing his bearings by means of a powerful telescope, he dived straight for our man. Before the latter realised what was taking place, there was a loud rattle of machine gun fire, and the enemy was off, as fast as he had come. I saw a thick column of black smoke rising from our aeroplane—a bullet had struck the petrol tank—and the next instant it burst into flames. Whoever the pilot was, he certainly was a brave, cool fellow. To dive at once for safety would mean destruction, for the rush of the wind would have carried the flames to the wings of the machine. So, with the petrol tank blazing fiercely behind him, he brought his plane slowly to the ground, and saved his own and his observer's life, though he was badly burnt in doing so."

"Our visitor from the sky was back again to-day," records Fr. Doyle next day, "repeating his old trick with the same success, this time against one of our captive balloons. It was a thrilling sight to see the huge bag of gas burst into flame as the bullets hit it, and more thrilling still to watch the two unfortunate occupants of the car jump for their lives, fall like stones through the air more rapidly each second, till with an intense gasp of relief we saw the parachute open and both men land unhurt in safety."

"It was a beautiful clear morning," notes Fr. Doyle on 24th March, "such a morning as would tempt even the laziest aviator

[5] A name which the Irish soldiers picked up in France, as their attempt to pronounce *les Allemands*.

to have a sail; so many eyes were on the watch out for visitors. We had not long to wait. Away in the distance a solitary German aeroplane was seen approaching, flying very fast towards where we were. With that love for fair play and a good even fight, for which the British native is so justly famous, three of our machines together made for the adventurous German, probably thinking he would fly for his life back to where he came from. On the contrary, the rude fellow made for them; in a brace of shakes he had sent two of our machines crashing to the ground and a third limping home, evidently badly mauled; and then, seeing there was no one else 'having any,' continued quietly on his journey. I have seen (in the newspapers) one of our men taking on eight Germans at a time; but they cannot have been of the same stuff as our visitor who is evidently a 'topper.' "

Two days later, Fr. Doyle chronicles for his father the definite demise of his famous dug-out.[6] "My dear little dug-out, up in the trenches," he says, "which sheltered Fr. Browne and myself alternately, has vanished. It did not fall gloriously in battle, pierced through with a shell, or blown sky-high by a cunningly driven mine-shaft; it did not even crumble away slowly, worn out by old age and labours like its venerable owner; it was ignominiously laid low by a common pick and shovel. *Sic transit gloria* dug-out—sorry I don't know the Latin word, but then the Romans were soldiers, not moles as we are.

"I loved my tiny sand-bag hut, even though the roof was wondrously low and you had almost to put your legs outside the door if you wanted to stretch them. It would have given about as much protection as a cardboard box, had a shell hit it plump. But once inside I felt quite 'comfy,' even when falling crumps made its poor sides quiver and shake again. Many a time, during the long hard winter, have I crept in out of the bitter cold with a sigh of relief, happy in the thought that the snow, at least, could not reach me there.

"However, by an unlucky chance, this house on the hill stood apparently in the direct line of fire of a German battery. They

[6] See page 452.

landed four shells in front of the 'hall-door,' fortunately dropping them over the sand-bag wall in front, which saved the homestead considerably. They bashed in the trench a foot behind the house, much to the consternation of Fr. Browne, who was inside at the time; like a wise man he cleared out for safer quarters. Twice they smashed the trench a few yards in front, and once a biggish shell cut clean in two our beautiful tree which spread its arms over the roof, tearing the back out of the patient dug-out. As the tree was a good eight inches or more in diameter, it was just as well it got the first smack.

"Shortly afterwards the General came along and seeing the state of affairs, told the Padre to get him gone out of the danger zone, which I am sorry to say the disobedient Padre did not do; and then gave orders for the house to be pulled down, even though he had to admit that not a penny of rent was due. I felt there was little use in my trying to prove to the General that his fears were quite unfounded and that there was absolutely no danger. But I do not mind telling you the cause of my security. I have a first-class guardian angel; which is not to be wondered at since you and darling Mother baptised me Gabriel. Whoever he is, he is a real decent chap and has done his work well. When the shelling begins, I send him out to sit on top of the roof. He does not like it a bit, nor can I blame him, for things are hot at times; but he goes all the same and then takes it out of me. Sometimes I hear him give a whistle or whatever angels do in that way; and he shouts down, 'Look out, Bill, there's a big one coming.' I know he only does that to frighten me, to try to get the wind up, as they say. So I shout back, "Go to heaven!'—for I suppose you can't send a respectable angel any place else; and we remain the best of friends. He is the best back-stop I ever met; but then he has the advantage of a big pair of wings to swick off the nasty dangerous ones to a safe distance. I am sorry to say he has lost his job now, for the morning I came out of the trenches the homestead was laid low. But I have promised to take him on again and to give him plenty to do before the summer is over!"

It is hard to know what to make of this rather elaborate

parable, so characteristic of the writer's humour. Anyway he was soon to find himself in more dangerous positions without even the meagre shelter of his dug-out; and before the summer was over, it was the angel of death whose wings were to be outstretched above him. Meanwhile, however, he had a merciful respite.

He was only a week back in the trenches after his short trip home, when the 48th Brigade received welcome orders to move to the rear for a rest. The rest, however, seems to have consisted chiefly of extra drill, apparently in preparation for the coming offensive. "We left Belgium," he writes, "on the Saturday before Palm Sunday (*i.e.* 31st March)—a glorious morning, dry under foot, with brilliant sunshine. The Brigade of four regiments made a gallant show, each headed by its band of pipers, and followed by the transport, etc. We were the first to move off, and so came in for an extra share of greetings from the villagers who turned out to see us pass, as fine a lot of sturdy lads as you could wish to gaze on, not to mention the gallant chaplain.

"Our march for the first day was not a very long one, something about 20 miles, but, as every pace took us further and further from the trenches, the march was a labour of love. At mid-day a halt was called for dinner, which had been cooking slowly in the travelling kitchens which accompanied us, and, in a few minutes, every man was sitting by the road-side, negotiating a big supply of hot meat and potatoes with a substantial chunk of bread. We, poor officers, were left to hunt for ourselves, a hunt which did not promise well at first, as the people in the *estaminets* were anything but friendly, and said they had nothing to give us to eat. The reason, I discovered later, was that some British officers had gone away without paying their bill, a not uncommon thing, I am sorry to say. Eventually, with the help of a little palaver and my bad French, our party secured some excellent bread and butter, coffee, and a basket of fresh eggs. On again after an hour's rest.

"Marching with a heavy rifle and full kit is no joke, hence our pace is slow. I often wonder how the poor men stick it, and stick it they do, most of them at least, till I have seen

them drop senseless by the road from sheer exhaustion. As a rule they are left there to follow the column as best they can, for if they knew that falling out meant a lift, not many of the regiment would reach their destination on foot. To make matters worse we had to tramp along over the rough paved roads, which must be an invention of the Old Boy to torture people. At first the road feels like this, mmmmm, then after ten miles ΛΛΛΛΛΛ till at last you are positive that they have paved the way with spikes instead of stones, something in this fashion ΛΛΛΛΛΛΛΛ · My poor feet! [7]

"At last the town [8] we were bound for came in sight, and hopes of a good rest were high, when word came along that we were not to stay in that haven of peace and plenty, but trudge on another three miles.[9] The camel is supposed to be a patient animal, but Tommy can give him points any day. Our lodging was a mutilated country farmhouse, dirty and uncomfortable, the less said about it the better, but everyone was too tired to care much, even though we officers, snoring on the floor, felt inclined to envy the sardines in their comfortable box.

"It was impossible to have Mass for the men in the morning, even though it was Palm Sunday, as there was much work to be done and we had to be off early. I got away to the little village and offered up the Holy Sacrifice for them, emptied a coffee pot, and fell into my place as the regiment marched off. That was a hard day. We were all stiff and sore for want of previous exercise, and in addition were well scourged by sleet, and rain, and snow, though, at times, the sun did its best to brighten things up a bit. Our luck turned when we reached our night's halting place, a good-sized [10] town with comfortable billets. A big party of my men were quartered in the public ball-room, which contained an automatic organ. The last I saw of them was a score of 'couples' waltzing round quite gaily,

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[7] It was not Fr. Doyle's first pedestrian experience on these roads. See p. 55.

[8] Hazebrouck (12,500 inhabitants before the war), about 12 miles east of Saint-Omer.

[9] The village of Wallon-Cappel.

[10] Presumably Saint Omer, or perhaps Saint Martin au Laërt just beyond it.

without a sign of having the best part of a forty mile march to their credit.

"Monday saw us early afoot. Nothing of great interest, except that the country was becoming more hilly, and prettier, the stones harder, our feet and shoulders sorer, quite a longing for the repose of the trenches was springing up in many a heart. That evening ended our tramp, and here we have been ever since, and are to remain for some time longer, much to our joy. Probably we shall return to the same place we came from, but no one really knows our future movements."

NEIGHBOURHOOD OF ST. OMER.

"Here" was a little village in the Pas de Calais called Nordausques, on the right (east) of the main Saint-Omer-Calais road, about ten miles from each of these places. During this fortnight, away from the sound of the guns, Fr. Doyle had a very busy time. So indeed had the men. "The morning," he says, "is given up to various exercises, one of which is the storming of a dummy German trench to the accompaniment of fearful, blood-curdling yells, enough to terrify the bravest enemy. The afternoon is spent at football and athletic sports, so that the men are having a good, if a strenuous, time. So is the poor Padre. My two regiments are quartered in two vil-

lages some miles apart. The four companies of each regiment in different hamlets, and to make things more inconvenient still, the two platoons of each company, thirty-two in all, are distributed in as many farmhouses. You can imagine I have no easy task to get round to see all my men, which I am anxious to do, so as to make sure that every man, if possible, gets to his Easter Duty. I have Mass every morning for them with many Communions daily, seventy to-day in one church; and then in the evening, having finished Devotions in one village and heard the men's Confessions, I ride over to the other for Rosary and Benediction, with more Confessions. In addition to this, there are many stray units scattered about in various places, machine-gunners, trench mortar battery men, etc., who, with the instruction of converts, prevent me from feeling time hanging on my hands."

This brief sojourn in the Pas de Calais enabled Fr. Doyle to celebrate Holy Week and Easter fittingly and thus to bring into these poor fellows' rest-interval emotions higher than those involved in rehearsals for future bloodshed. "On Spy Wednesday evening," he recounts, "after Benediction, I told the men I wanted nine volunteers to watch an hour during the following night before the Altar of Repose. I had barely finished speaking when the whole church made a rush up to the altar rails and were keenly disappointed when I told them I could only take the first nine, though I could have had thirty an hour if I wanted them. I was touched by the poor fellows' generosity, for they had just finished a long, hard day's work with more before them. I got the nine men to bring their blankets into the little sacristy, and while one watched, the others slept. Surely our Lord must have been pleased with His Guard of Honour, and will bless them as only He can."

"Easter Sunday," he continues, "was quite a red letter day in the annals of the town. The regiment turned out in full strength, headed by the pipers, and crowded the sanctuary, every inch of the church, and out beyond. I had eight stalwart sergeants standing guard, with fixed bayonets, round the altar. At the Consecration, and also at the Communion of the Mass, the buglers sounded the Royal Salute which is only given to

Monarchs. The guard, at the word of command, presented arms, and in our poor, humble way we tried to do honour to the Almighty King of Kings on the day of His glorious triumph. I must not forget to add that the lassies and maidens did us the honour of coming to sing during Mass, casting many an envious glance (so rumour says) down on the handsome Irish lads praying so devoutly below."

No wonder that Fr. Doyle wrote a little later: "The faith and fervour of our Irish lads have made a great impression everywhere. I was once quite delighted to hear the curé rubbing it into his congregation, drawing a contrast between them and the Irish soldiers, much to the disadvantage of the former." On Easter Sunday the good curé received a very tangible proof of Irish faith, for his collection bag contained a very unprecedented number of silver coins and five franc notes. When referring to his host at Nordausques, Fr. Doyle was led to make some general observations which may be worth recording:

"The village was blest by the presence of a holy, zealous curé, who seemed more anxious even than I, that the men should profit spiritually by their stay in his parish, and not only gave me every facility for my work, but himself helped as far as he could. I am convinced the French clergy will benefit very much by this war. All over the country, as you know, there are a multitude of tiny parishes, numbering often less than 200 souls including children. Even if all therein were practical Catholics, that would never give work for a priest with two wooden legs, the result being that a man with little to do often does less than he has to do, for abundance of work creates a spirit of zeal. Now that the ranks of the clergy have been sorely decimated, some three thousand French priests having been killed already, the survivors will have to multiply their efforts, and take charge of, perhaps, two or three parishes, much to their personal advantage, I think."

The quiet, if strenuous, interlude amid the hills and pine-woods of the Pas de Calais came to an end all too soon. Low Sunday saw the men once more on their trenchward march, to the tune of cold pelting rain. That night a halt was made close to Saint-Omer, which gave Fr. Doyle an opportunity of visit-

ing the twelfth century Church and the old Jesuit College from which Stonyhurst was founded. The final stage of the journey was very trying, the men "had to face the cobble stones at six in the morning with a hurricane of rain and sleet which slashed like a whip," and arrived near Locre, after tramping for over eight hours without a morsel of food. Once more life in and out of the trenches began. "We have not had such a quiet time for the past fifteen months," records Fr. Doyle thankfully.

(3.) MAY DEVOTIONS

During the first fortnight of May the whole 48th Brigade—consisting of 2nd, 8th, and 9th R. Dublin Fusiliers and 6–7th R. Irish Rifles—was out of the trenches. The 2nd and 8th Dublins were in Locre and the 9th were at Clare Camp less than two miles west of Locre; the Rifles were at Kemmell, three miles east of Locre.[11]

Fr. Doyle thus secured a few free days and, as he tells his father, decided "to make a little excursion and to pay a visit to the dear good nuns at Amettes,[12] who were so kind to me on my first arrival in France. It was a trifle of some eighty kilometres (about fifty miles) of a journey. But the weather being glorious, dry and not too hot, I thought little of it as I mounted my bicycle and started to trundle my twenty odd stone along the roads of France.

"I went along leisurely, having plenty of time, as I knew the Sisters would put me up for the night. So I made many little detours to visit some of the churches, which are always interesting. I was rather amused in one to see, behind the altar, a very handsome stained glass window of the Nativity. The

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[11] See map p. 433.

[12] See p. 230 above. Of course he really went on this "second pilgrimage to Amettes" to secure light and grace. "During the journey I felt our Lord wanted to give me some message" (cited p. 230 above). Thus once more is illustrated the coexistence in Fr. Doyle of mystic self-sacrifice and of exuberant witty naturalness. On 7th July, 1916, he had made his first pilgrimage to Amettes "to obtain three special graces: (1) the gift of constant prayer, (2) strength to bear little pains, (3) great devotion to visiting the Blessed Sacrament."

shepherds stand grouped at the back, our Lady and S. Joseph kneel on one side of the crib, while on the other, dwarfing every other figure, is the Curé himself in an attitude of prayer, looking as if he had swallowed a pound of butter! At the bottom of the same church is a mortuary slab which reads as follows: 'Erected by Monsieur X in memory of his dear wife Marie, who lived 79 years, 4 months, 6 days. They were married 55 years, 9 months, 2 days, 7 hours. *R.I.P.*' There is nothing like being accurate; but possibly the unfortunate man wanted to record that he had so much of his purgatory already done.

"I reached the convent late in the evening, after a most enjoyable and restful ride through the country, away from the din and roar of war. The Sister who opened the door looked at me in a dazed, frightened sort of way. 'I remember you perfectly, Father," she said, 'but I think I had better let the Mother know first.' Then she vanished like a flash, leaving me rather mystified. In a few moments, Mother and all her chicks came swarming in: 'Mais, mon Père, you are dead! We saw in the paper that you were killed by a shell—Père Doyle, S.J., n'est-ce-pas?' I then told her about Fr. Denis Doyle, S.J., who, God rest his soul, has got *me* so many Masses and prayers by mistake. Thereupon we all fell upon each other's necks. The convent larder was next emptied; and, for a dead man, I did remarkably well, ending with a glorious sleep. I spent most of the next day wandering round the country, with a visit to the home and shrine of the beggarman saint, Benedict Joseph Labre. I often think he must be nearly mad with envy watching us in the trenches, surrounded, walked on and sat upon by his 'pets.' But from the same pets deliver us, O Lord, as speedily as may be, this coming hot weather!

"On my way home I took in Noeux-les-Mines, and heard from the Curé—who, by the way, looked very uncomfortable and made a grab for the holy water when I appeared from the dead—the whole story of his Church and our Lady's statue. Before we left the Loos district our Divisional General Hickie suggested that all ranks should subscribe towards a memorial of our stay there and a monument to the memory of the men who

had fallen in action. This was to take the form of a life-size statue of our Lady of Victories, to be carved in white marble by the best Paris sculptor and erected in the Church of Noeux-les-Mines, where the Divisional Headquarters were,[13] with the names of the fallen inscribed on the pedestal. We are all to receive a small book containing a photo of the statue, the names of the subscribers, etc., which will be a pleasing memento of the 16th Irish Division.

"On Passion Sunday [14] the men arrived with the box, and asked the Curé where he wished our Lady of Victories to be erected. As it was only a quarter of an hour before High Mass, he told them to come back later. Then he turned into his own garden, a few yards away, to finish his Office. The Mass servers were playing outside the Church, which at the moment was empty—the sacristan, having finished his preparations, had lately left—when a 15-inch shell, fired from a German naval gun, crashed through the wall and exploded in the sanctuary. As a rule, shells burst on impact, but this, being an armour-piercing shell, came through the wall like paper and exploded inside, with results impossible to describe.

"When I went into the ruin, I excaimed, 'M. le Curé, surely you have had fifty shells in here!' 'No,' he answered, 'only one; the havoc you see is the work of a single shot.' Not a trace remains of the beautiful altar where I so often offered the Holy Sacrifice. The carved stalls, the altar rails, benches and chairs are smashed into splinters, the roof and parts of the walls are stripped of plaster. I have never seen such a scene of destruction; the explanation being that the explosion took place inside the Church and the liberated gases rushed round like ten thousand mad animals, rending and tearing all they met, seeking for an exit. The building is nearly as large as Kingstown Church, but from end to end it is a perfect ruin. Pictures, statues, organ, all are gone; the door of the sacristy

[13] From 26th March to 26th August, 1916. £250 was collected.

[14] The statue left Paris on Friday, 16th March, 1917, but owing to a delay of the motor lorry on the way, it did not arrive at Noeux until the morning of Sunday, 18th March. It was stored in the Curé's house at Bruay until 2nd October, 1921, when it was blessed by Mgr. Julian and placed on a side altar in the restored and rebuilt Church of St. Martin at Noeux-les-Mines.

was blown in and the vestments torn to ribbons, while not a particle remains of the beautiful stained glass which filled the twenty large windows.

"There is just one ray of comfort in this sad destruction: not a life was lost. Ten minutes later, the Church would have been crowded with civilians and soldiers; probably few of them would have been touched by bits of the shell, but not a soul would have been left alive by the shock. I have seen men on the battle-field, sometimes a row at a time, standing or leaning against a trench, untouched by bullet or shrapnel, killed simply by the force of an exploding shell. You can picture the result in a strong enclosed building.

"Here, as in so many other places, God again showed His power in a wonderful way. Quite near the altar stood a magnificent Calvary. One arm of the Crucified is torn off, but otherwise neither the figure nor the cross is injured. Poor S. John got badly smashed up, and S. Mary Magdalen has a bullet through her heart, the very thing she would have asked for. But our Blessed Lady, with the exception of a slight scratch on one hand, 'stands by the cross,' absolutely untouched in the midst of all the havoc and ruin. The shell fell in the sanctuary, blowing the altar to bits. After much searching and digging among the débris, the tabernacle was found whole and entire; inside the ciborium was standing upright, not even the cover having been knocked off, and the Consecrated Particles in perfect order, though the tabernacle must have been blown to the ceiling."

Fr. Doyle was soon back in Belgium among his men, who were enjoying their respite from the trenches. The two chaplains, Fr. Browne and Fr. Doyle, availed themselves of this interval to organize Month of May devotions for the men. Every evening they had rosary, hymns, short sermon, and Benediction, followed by more hymns—the 'boys' liked to hear their own voices. "One result of the devotions," writes Fr. Doyle, "has been the conversion of the only really black sheep in the regiment, a man very many years away from his duty, a hard morose character, upon whom I had many times failed to make any impression. I saw it was useless to argue with

him, so, at the beginning of the month, I handed him over to the Blessed Virgin as a hopeless case, with which she alone could deal. Last evening I met him and thought I would try once more to make him see the awful danger he was running of losing his soul. It was all no use, the devil had his prey too tightly held to shake him off like that. Then a thought struck me, 'Look,' I said, 'this is the month of May; you surely won't refuse our Blessed Lady.' The poor fellow fell on his knees, and, there and then, made his confession. I gave him Holy Communion and now he is a changed man, as happy as a lark."

In Fr. Doyle's notebook there are some hastily written outlines of talks to his men. Though they refer to an earlier period of the year—during this May he preached chiefly on the Litany of our Lady [15]—these rough notes will give us an idea of his practical, homely style. Hence a few extracts will be given here.

"TWO SOLEMN MOMENTS"

"The end of that life which God gave to be spent in His service.

"A solemn moment when we lie down for the last time and look back upon our life which is gone for ever—a precious talent entrusted to us, not to misuse, or bury in ground, like slothful servants, but to spend to good use till the Master comes.

"What is true of end of life equally true of end of a year. Another milestone of our journey to eternity. Just 365 days of a life, already so short, passed away. All of us have taken a big stride towards the hour of our death, and let us not forget it, the happiness and reward of Heaven.

"For a moment let us pause in this journey of life and look back. What strikes us? (1) God's goodness. How many began last year well and strong, full of plans, now dead. How

[15] "I remember well," writes Fr F. Browne, "Fr. Doyle's wonderful fervour and eloquence on 'Virgin most faithful' and also on 'Help of Christians.'"

many a young life quenched on the battle-field. A million a week died. All that time God's Providence has watched over us and protected us from danger. His love surrounded us.

"(2) Our opportunities. Life means more than the mere enjoyment of living; the time of sowing the seed of good works whose harvest we shall reap in Heaven; as long as we live we can merit. Pile up treasures in Heaven and increase our happiness for all eternity. Holy Mass, Sacraments, and prayers, every act we do for God means greater joy and glory.

"(3) Our return. Walk back the road—our angel has kept the watch of every act. Tablets to mark spots where our acts were done. (*a*) Piles of curses, bad language. (*b*) Rows of empty beer bottles with all the sins they bring. (*c*) In a word, little good but much evil.

"A sad picture, but we must not lose heart. Last mile of march, tighten knapsack on back, pull ourselves together and step out more hardy for the last mile. For many the last mile of life. We shall make it worthy of Him so good to us:—more prayers, duty better done; greater watchfulness over our tongues and our evil inclinations, so that we may exclaim: I have fought a good fight, done my duty to my country and my God:—a crown of glory."

"CONFESSION"

"A serious word: matter of life and death, eternal life, the salvation or damnation of many depend upon it. Going to the Front in a couple of weeks, in middle of shot and shell, in danger at any moment of instant death. Are you ready to face God? None of us are afraid, it has to come sometime, but, 'know ye not there is a judgment?' 'O Lord, preserve thou my soul.' So much depends on it. 'What shall I do . . . to judge.' God won't be very angry about our sins. He knows our weakness. 'He is a patient and merciful God; but furious that we should appear before His holy Face covered with sin and every abomination when we could have gotten rid of all.

"The Wedding Garment. You know where you can find the

white 'wedding garment,' find the pond of the Sacred Blood where to wash sins away. Don't delay. Hell full of men who said 'later on.' God help the man who, when he had the chance, did not make his peace with God.

"I am pleading for your immortal souls; it matters little in the end whether we have been rich or poor, lives of hardship or pleasure, but to save one's soul or lose it matters much.

"It may be hard for some to square up accounts (not half so hard as you think) but a million times harder to burn in Hell, cursing your folly.

Confessions 4 to 6 in C. Hut."

"THIRD SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY"

"Saddened and disappointed not better response (Confession). Man who said he would go after Boer War. All intend to go; miserable. 'Later on.' Hell full of men who said 'later on.' Public house.

"To-day's Gospel (*S. Matthew* 8. 1–13.): Leper, awful sight, image of sin. 'Lord, Thou canst make me clean.' 'Go show yourself to the priest.' Christ says same now. He is longing to forgive the past; to wash away every iniquity: to make sins red as scarlet, whiter than snow. For the sake of your immortal souls. Far harder to hear the awful words 'Depart ye cursed, I know ye not.' "

"FOURTH SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY"

" 'Lord, save us, we perish' Gospel (*S. Matthew* 8. 23. 27.).

Man's life a warfare; not for country, body, but immortal souls.

"Our Lord wishes to remind us of this incident hinted in gospel. We often find fierce storms springing up in our souls. We call them temptations, storms of anger—impurity, craving for drink, stirred up by the devil who hopes to lead us to destruction. We need not fear temptation.

(1)) Not sin:—Christ's temptation.

(2) A good sign—Blessed Curé d'Ars. 'Became pleasing to God.' 'Prepare thy soul for temptation.'

(3) Merit.

"*Remedies.* (*a*) Avoid devil (women). (*b*) Pray. Christ knew danger of disciples. 'Came a great calm,' the reward of victory; remorse after sin; each victory means strength. 'Count it all joy.' "

(4.) THE PADRE AT WORK

Long before the titles of our Lady's Litany were exhausted it was time to return to the trenches. At the conclusion of such a respite, the chaplain used to give General Absolution. In a letter written to his father about this time Fr. Doyle thus describes and comments on the touching scene:

"We reap a good harvest with confessions every day, at any time the men care to come, but there are many who for one reason or another cannot get away, hence, before going into the trenches, which nearly always means death for some poor fellows, we give them a General Absolution. I do not think there can be a more touching or soul-inspiring sight than to see a whole regiment go down upon their knees, to hear that wave of prayer go up to Heaven, as hundreds of voices repeat the Act of Contrition in unison, 'My God, I am heartily sorry that I have ever offended You.' There is an earnestness and a depth of feeling in their voices, which tells of real sorrow, even if one did not see the tears gather in the eyes of more than one brave man. And then the deep, reverent silence as the priest raises his hand over the bowed heads and pronounces the words of forgiveness. Human nature is ever human nature, and even Irish soldiers commit sins; you can picture, then, the feelings of any priest standing before that kneeling throng, knowing that by the power of God his words have washed every soul pure and white. I love to picture the foul garment of sin falling from every man there at the words of Absolution,

and to watch the look of peace and happiness on the men's faces as they lift their rifles and fall into rank, ready for anything, even 'to meet the divil himself,' as my friend of long ago shouted out as he marched by me. Don't you agree with me that the consolations and real joys of my life far outweigh the hard things and privations, even if there were no 'little nest-egg' being laid up in a better and happier world?"

It is when we read such an extract that we most clearly realise the inner motive-power which sustained Fr. Doyle amid "the hard things and privations," far more irksome and painful to him than to one mentally less idealistic or physically less highly strung and sensitive. He was brave and untiring, not because he found life congenial, but because he found it so hard. His interests were concentrated on his mission to be "another Christ"; this was the ideal in whose consuming fire all other ideas were fused. "I can say with all truth," he wrote, "I have never spent a happier year. For though I have occasionally felt as if the limit of endurance were reached, I have never lost my good spirits, which have helped me over many a rough road." He needed all his courage. What a life it was! From extremes of heat to unimagined depths of cold; for days, water above, below, everywhere, and then from this aquatic misery to burning sun and parching thirst. There were long tramps by day, with pack and equipment growing heavier each hour, till one became a mass of sweat and mud; nights without sleep, burying the dead or stumbling along trenches to minister to the dying; nights, too, made hideous by bursting shells or the still more terrible warning of approaching poison-gas. Our thoughts go back to Paul of Tarsus, whose life was spent "in journeying often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, . . . in labour and painfulness, in much watchings, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." (*II Cor.* 11. 26.)[16] Yet, as Fr. Doyle pointed out, these

[16] Life at the Front was after all not so different from that of the foreign mission which had been Fr. Doyle's ambition. "You have to be an Indian," wrote the martyr John de Brébeuf in 1635. "Bend your shoulders to the same burdens as they bear. . . . Remember that Jesus Christ is the true greatness of the missionary. Him alone and His cross are you to seek, in running after these people. With Him you will find roses on thorns, sweets

physical sufferings were light in comparison with that constant sense of insecurity and suspense, the strain of being *never* really out of danger for miles behind the front, the oppressive feeling of waiting for the stroke of an uplifted sword. "Pain and privation," he writes, "are only momentary, they quickly pass and become even delightfully sweet, if only borne in the spirit with which many of my grand boys take these things: "Shure, Father, it's not worth talking about; after all, is it not well to have some little thing to suffer for God and His Blessed Mother?' But the craven fear which at times clutches the heart, the involuntary shrinking and dread of human nature at danger and even death, are things which cannot be expressed in words. An officer, who had gone through a good deal himself, said to me recently: 'I never realized before what our Lord must have suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane when He began to fear and grow sorrowful.' Yet His grace is always there to help one when most needed, and though the life is hard and trying at times, I have never ceased to thank Him for the privilege (I can call it nothing else) of sharing in this glorious work."

In a letter written to his father on 25th July, he invites him to come in spirit with him on a visit to the trenches. He is thus led to describe a typical incident of his "glorious work," which must have been as consoling to the father as it was to the son. "There is a party coming towards us down the trench," he writes; "and as they have the right of way, we must squeeze into a corner to let them pass. A poor wounded fellow lies on a stretcher, with death already stamped on his face. The bearers lay their burden gently down—these rough

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in bitterness, everything in nothingness. . . . You will sleep on a skin, and many a night you will never close an eye on account of the vermin that swarm over you. . . . Blasphemy and obscenity are commonly on their lips. You are often without Mass; and when you succeed in saying it, your cabin is full of smoke or snow. The Indians never leave you alone and are continually yelling and shouting at the top of their voice. . . . The food will be insipid, but the gall and vinegar of our Blessed Saviour will make it like honey on your lips. . . . You have only the necessities of life, and that makes it easy to be united with God. . . . You are obliged to pray, for you are facing death at every moment."—T. J. Campbell, S.J., *Pioneer Priests of North America: Among the Hurons,* 1910, pp. 104–107.

Locre Convent.
(The window of Father Doyle's room is marked X X.)

Imperial War Museum Photograph. *Crown Copyright.*

Ruined Village of Wytschaete, 8th June, 1917.

men have the tender heart of a woman for the wounded—reverently uncover their heads and withdraw a little as the priest kneels behind the dying man's head. A glance at the identity-disc on his wrist, stamped with his name, regiment, and religion, shows that he is a Catholic—for there are few men, no matter what their belief, who do not carry a rosary or a Catholic medal round their necks. I wonder what the non-Catholic Padres think of this fearful increase of Idolatry! 'Ah, Father, is that you? Thanks be to God for His goodness in sending you; my heart was sore to die without the priest. Father—the voice was weak and came in gasps—Father, oh, I am glad now, I have always tried to live a good life, it makes death so easy.' The Rites of the Church were quickly administered, though it was hard to find a sound spot on that poor, smashed face for the Holy Oils, and my hands were covered with his blood. The moaning stopped; I have noticed that a score of times, as if the very touch of the anointing brought relief. I pressed the crucifix to his lips as he murmured after me: 'My Jesus, mercy,' and then, as I gave him the Last Blessing, his head fell back, and the loving arms of Jesus were pressing to His Sacred Heart the soul of another of His friends, who I trust will not forget, amid the joys of Heaven, him who was sent across his path to help him in his last moments.

"It is little things like this which help one over the hard days and sweeten a life which has little in it naturally attractive. If you had come up the trench with me twelve months ago on the morning of the gas attack and watched that same scene repeated hour after hour, I think you would have thanked God for the big share you have in the salvation of so many souls."

We are able to narrate one or two incidents of "this glorious work" which occurred at this period. "The enemy for once did me a good turn," he writes on 22nd May. "I had arranged to hear the men's confessions shortly before he opened fire, and a couple of well directed shells helped my work immensely, by putting the fear of God into the hearts of a few careless boys who might not have troubled about coming near me otherwise. I wonder were the Sacraments

ever administered under stranger circumstances? Picture my little dug-out (none too big at any time) packed with men who had dashed in for shelter from the splinters and shrapnel, coming down like hail. In one corner is kneeling a poor fellow recently joined—who has not 'knelt to the priest,' as the men quaintly say, for many a day—trying to make his Confession. I make short work of that, for a shower of clay and stones falling at the door is a gentle hint that the 'crumps' are getting uncomfortably near, and I want to give him Absolution, in case an unwelcome visitor should walk in. Then, while the ground outside rocks and seems to split with the crash of the shells, I give them all Holy Communion, say a short prayer, and perform the wonderful feat of packing a few more men into our sardine tin of a house.

"As soon as I got the chance, I slipped round to see how many casualties there were, for I thought not a mouse could survive the bombardment. Thank God, no one was killed or even badly hit, and the firing having ceased, we could breathe again. I was walking up the trench from the dressing station when I suddenly heard the scream of another shell. . . . It was then I realized my good fortune. There are two ways to my dug-out, and, naturally, I choose the shorter. This time, without any special reason, I went by the longer way; and it was well I did, for the shell pitched in the other trench, and probably would have caught me nicely as I went by. But instead of that it wreaked its vengeance on my unfortunate orderly, who was close by in his dug-out, sending him spinning on his head but otherwise not injuring him. I found another string of men awaiting my return in order to get Confession and Holy Communion. In fact I had quite a busy evening, thanks once more to Fritz's High Explosive, which has a wonderful, persuasive effect of its own. I am wondering how many pounds of H.E. I shall require when giving my next retreat!"

Before describing an exploit of Fr. Doyle in rendering spiritual aid to a raiding party we shall give his description

of a raid. "'As you might like to know," he tells his father on 29th May, "how the game of raiding your neighbour is played, a sort of novelty for your next garden-party, I shall give you a few particulars. You dig two trenches about a hundred yards apart, and fill one with the enemy, who are well provided with hand bombs, machine guns, etc. Some night, when you think they won't expect your coming, a party of your men climb over the top of their parapet and start to crawl à la Red Indian towards the foe. It is exciting work, for star shells are going up every few minutes and lighting up No Man's Land, during which time your men lie on their faces motionless, probably cursing the inventor of the said star shells and praying for black darkness. It is part of the game that if the enemy see you, they promptly paste you with bombs (which hurt) or give you a shower bath of leaden bullets. For this reason, when the game is played at garden parties, it is recommended to place husbands in one trench and wives in the other and to oppose P. P.s or Rev. Mothers to their curates and communities; in this way accuracy of aim is wonderfully improved and the casualties become delightfully high, which (in these days) is a desideratum when the supper hour arrives.

"Having reached a certain distance, the raiders wait for the artillery barrage to open. That is a sight never to be forgotten. At a fixed moment, every gun opens fire simultaneously, with a crash that shakes the heavens, and, for five minutes, the enemy's trench is, from end to end, a line of fire lit up by the hundreds of bursting shells. Then the barrage lifts like a curtain to the second trench to keep back reinforcements, while the attackers dash through the cut barbed wire over into the trench, sometimes to meet a stout opposition in spite of the awful shelling, sometimes only finding the bleeding remains of what was once a brave man. Dug-outs are bombed if their occupants won't come out, papers and maps secured, prisoners captured, if possible—to be questioned later for information which seems to be freely and foolishly given; and then the raiders, carrying their

own dead and wounded, get back as quickly as they can to their own lines; for by this the enemy artillery has opened fire and things are lively."

He then proceeds to describe an adventure of his in which, he thinks, "there was really little danger." "A few nights ago," he writes, "I had been along the front line as usual, to give the men a General Absolution, which they are almost as anxious to receive for the comfort it will be for their friends at home, should they fall, as for themselves. I was coming down to the advanced dressing station, when I learned that a small party had 'gone over the top' on our right, though I had been told the raid was only from the left. When I got to the spot I found they had all gone and were lying well out in No Man's Land. It was a case of Mahomet and the mountain once more. The poor 'mountain' could not come back, though they were just longing to, but the prophet could go out, could he not? So Mahomet rolled over the top of the sand-bags into a friendly shell hole, and started to crawl on his hands and knees and stomach towards the German trenches. Mahomet, being only a prophet, was allowed to use bad language, of which privilege he availed himself, so report goes, to the full, for the ground was covered with bits of broken barbed wire, shell splinters, nettles, etc., etc., and the poor prophet on his penitential pilgrimage left behind him much honest sweat and not a few drops of blood.

"That was a strange scene! A group of men lying on their faces, waiting for certain death to come to some of them, whispering a fervent act of contrition, and God's priest, feeling mighty uncomfortable and wishing he were safely in bed a thousand miles away, raising his hand in Absolution over the prostrate figures. One boy, some little distance off, thinking the Absolution had not reached him, knelt bolt upright, and made an act of contrition you could have heard in Berlin, nearly giving the whole show away and drawing the enemy's fire.

"There was really little danger, as shell holes were plentiful, but not a little consolation, when I buried the dead next day, to think that none of them had died without Absolution.

I was more afraid getting back into our own trenches; for sentries, seeing a man coming from the direction of No Man's Land, do not bother much about asking questions and object to nocturnal visitors." [17]

The next night (24th May) another raid was made and Fr. Doyle recounts how he was able to help a poor prisoner. "One German prisoner, badly wounded in the leg, was brought in," he writes. "He knew only a few words of English, but spoke French fluently. I try to do all I can for the unfortunate prisoners, as sometimes not much sympathy is shown them, and they have evidently been drilled into believing that we promptly roast and eat them alive. I gave him a drink, made him as comfortable as possible, and then, seeing a rosary in his pocket, asked him was he a Catholic. 'I am a Catholic priest,' I said, 'and you need not have any fear.' 'Ah, monsieur,' he replied, 'vous êtes un vrai prêtre' (you are a true priest). He gave me his home address in Germany, and asked me to write to his parents. 'Poor father and mother will be uneasy,' he said, as his eyes filled with tears. 'O mon Dieu! how I am suffering, but I offer it all up to You.' I hope to get a letter through by means of the Swiss Red Cross, which will be a comfort to his anxious parents, who seem good, pious souls." [18]

What a consoling little picture of Christian charity rising above human strife and passion! What an insight into the noble peace-mission of "a true priest"!

One other quotation will give a further little illustration of Fr. Doyle's ministry while his men were in reserve. Early on the morning of Sunday, 3rd June, they were relieved, after a rather strenuous time of sixteen days in the front line, more than usually trying for want of sleep. As Mass for the men was not till mid-day, Fr. Doyle had "planned

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[17] "No Man's Land, the space between the opposing trenches," writes Fr. Doyle on 26th January, 1917, "ought really to be called Dead Man's Land, for piles of brave fellows lie there unburied and will lie there till their bones are bleached. I tried to get permission to go out and give some of them Christian burial. But the Colonel would not hear of it, adding that he thought there were corpses enough already."

[18] See other instances of his kindness to prisoners on pp. 502 f.

a glorious *soak* in the convent, an unblushing, gluttonous feast of blankets, for the poor old tired 'oss." But through some misunderstanding his orderly did not turn up with his horse, so he had to trudge back with his heavy pack. On reaching his billet at 2 a. m., he found the door of his room locked. "I had not the heart to wake up the poor nuns," he says; "and after all, when one is fast asleep, is not a hard plank just as soft as a feather bed? You see I am becoming a bit of a philosopher!" "The next morning," he continues, "I had Mass in a field close to the camp. I wish you could have seen the men as they knelt in a hollow square round the improvised altar, brilliant sunshine overhead, and the soft green of spring about them. They looked so happy, poor lads, as I went down one line and up the other, giving them the Bread of the Strong, and I could not help thinking of another scene long ago when our Lord made the multitude sit down on the grass, and fed them miraculously with the seven loaves. Before I got to the end of my 700 Communions I felt wondrous pity for the twelve Apostles, for they must have been jolly tired also.

"At present I am living in the camp, which is further back even than the convent, out in the green fields of the country, most peaceful and restful. I have a little tent to myself, but have Rosary, Mass, Confessions, etc., out in the open. The men have absolutely no human respect, and kneel in rows waiting for their turn 'to scrape,' [19] as if they were in the church at home, paying no heed to the endless stream of traffic. I am sure non-Catholics must wonder what on earth we are at."

While solicitous for his flock when under his charge, he was not unmindful of them when dead. The following letter, which appeared in the *Irish Catholic* for 26th May, 1917, under the pseudonym 'Nemo,' was written by Fr. Doyle.

"One is often struck, on glancing over the papers, at the numerous appeals made to provide 'comforts for our troops,' but no one ever seems to think that the souls of those who

[19] "Scraping one's kettle" was expressive slang for cleaning one's soul by Confession.

have fallen in battle may possibly be in need of much greater comfort than the bodies of their comrades who survive.

"With all the spiritual help now at their disposal, even in the very firing line, we may be fairly confident that few, if any, of our Catholic men are unprepared to meet Almighty God. That does not mean they are fit for Heaven. God's justice must be fully satisfied, and the debt of forgiven sin fully atoned for in Purgatory. Hence I venture to appeal to the great charity of your readers to provide 'comforts for our dead soldiers' by having Masses offered for their souls. Remembrance of our dead and gratitude are virtues dear to every Irish heart. Our brave lads have suffered and fought and died for us. They have nobly given their lives for God and country. It is now our turn to make some slight sacrifice, so that they may soon enter into the joy of eternal rest."

(5.) WYTSCHAETE RIDGE

"To save you unnecessary anxiety," Fr. Doyle wrote to his father on 11th June, "I told you in my last note (that of 5th June already quoted) that we were again on the march, which was quite true, but the march was not backwards but towards the enemy. When I wrote we were on the eve of one of the biggest battles of the war, details of which you will have read in the morning papers." In another confidential letter of the same date (5th June), however, he was more communicative. "I have not told them at home," he wrote, "and do not want them to know, but we have had a terrible time for the last three weeks, constant and increasing shelling, with many wonderful escapes. We are on the eve of a tremendous battle and the danger will be very great. Sometimes I think God wishes the actual sacrifice of my life—the offering of it was made long ago. But, if so, that almost useless life will be given most joyfully. I feel wonderful peace and confidence in leaving myself absolutely in God's Hands. Only I know it would not be right, I would like never to take shelter from bursting shells; and, up to a few days ago, till ordered

by the Colonel, I never wore a steel helmet.[20] I want to give myself absolutely to Him to do with me just as He pleases, to strike or kill me, as He wishes, trying to go along bravely and truthfully, looking up into His loving Face, for surely He knows best. On the other hand I have the conviction, growing stronger every day, that nothing serious will befall me; a wound would be joy, 'to shed one's blood for Jesus,' when I would gladly empty my veins for Him. Otherwise why would He impress so strongly on my mind that this 'novitiate' out here is only the preparation for my real life's work? Why does He put so many schemes and plans into my mind? Why has He mapped out several little books, one of which will do great good, I believe, because every word will be His? Then the possibilities of the Holy Childhood have gripped me, and His little perishing souls, 10,000 a day, seem ever to be pleading for a sight of Jesus! Yet I have laid even the *desire* to do these things at His Feet, and I strive might and main to have no will but His, for this pleases Him most. I am very calm and trustful in face of the awful storm so soon to burst. But could it be otherwise, when He is ever with me and when I know that should I fall, it will only be into His Arms of love?"

Fr. Doyle atoned for his previous reticence by sending his father, immediately after the battle, a rather long account of his own experiences during the few weeks prior to the attack of 7th June, as well as during the actual engagement.

"For months past, preparations on a gigantic scale were being made for the coming attack, every detail of which the Germans knew. For some reason or other they left us in

[20] "On one occasion," recounts Captain Healy, "I had to reprimand him because he had neither his steel helmet nor his gas respirator. A few days afterwards, he came to where I was. He had one gas respirator round his neck, another round his waist and a third on his back; he had a knapsack on his right shoulder and one on his left shoulder; he had a steel helmet on his head and one in each hand. 'Now, Captain,' he said, 'do you think I am complying with the regulations?'" It was worth observing that no harm ever befell him owing to the absence of his tin hat, etc., and that on several occasions (e. g. pp. 504–506) the sight of Fr. Doyle sauntering around without these protective paraphernalia had a marvellous effect on dispirited or demoralised men.

comparative peace for a long time, and then suddenly started to shell us day and night.

"We had just gone into the line for our eight days, and a lively week it was. How we escaped uninjured from the rain of shells which fell round about us, I do not know. The men had practically no shelter, as their dug-outs would scarcely keep out a respectable fat bullet, not to speak of a nine or twelve-inch shell (this is the diameter of the shell-base, not its length), and used to run to me for protection like so many big children with a confidence I was far from feeling, that the 'priest' was a far better protection than yards of reinforced concrete.

"I have come back to my little home more than once in the early hours of the morning to find it packed with two-legged, smoking 'sardines,' quite happy and content in spite of Fritz's crumps, to be greeted with the remark: 'We were just saying, Father, that this is a lucky dug-out, and it is well for us that we have your Reverence with us.' God bless them for their simple faith and trust in Him, for I feel I owe it to my brave boys that we were not blown sky-high twenty times. In fact the 'Padre's Dug-out' was quite a standing joke among the officers, who used to come after a *strafe* to see how much of it was left.[21]

"Our next eight days in support were even worse, as the Germans had brought up more guns, and used them freely. Our Head-Quarters was a good sized house, which had never been touched since the war began, being well screened by a wood behind. We were in the middle of dinner the first evening, when in quick succession half a dozen shells burst close around. It was only later on we learned the reason of this unexpected attack. One of the officers, in spite of strict orders to the contrary, had gone on a raid with a map in his pocket on which he had marked various positions, our H. Q. among others. He was captured, and 'the fat was in

[21] This dug-out was No. 13 on the side of the hill where Strong Point 13 was situated, on the reverse slope of the ridge running along the valley between Wyschaete and Kemmel Hill. It was still untouched when the position was evacuated on the 7th June, 1917.

the fire.' Owing to someone's carelessness, no provision had been made for protection against bombardment, and we had to stand in the open with our backs against a brick wall, watching the shells pitching right and left and in front, wondering when would our turn come.

"Three or four times each night, at a couple of hours' interval, the torture began afresh, just as one was dozing off to sleep, sending men and officers flying for safety to the 'shady side' of the house. Shelling in the open or in a trench is not so pleasant, but this was horrible, for we knew the guns were searching for the spot so obligingly marked on our map. One morning about 2 a. m. I had gone down the road to look after some men, when two shells smashed in the roof of the house I had left, killing five of our staff, and nearly knocking out the Colonel and two other officers. We got shelter in another Mess, only to find that this was a marked spot too, though the aim was not so accurate.

"All during this time our guns were keeping up the bombardment of the Wytschaete Village and Ridge, which the 16th Irish Division were to storm. I think I am accurate in saying that not for ten minutes at any time during these sixteen days did the roar of our guns cease. At times one or two batteries would keep the ball rolling, and then, with a majestic crash, every gun, from the rasping field piece up to the giant fifteen-inch howitzer, would answer to the call of battle, till not only the walls of the ruined houses shook and swayed but the very ground quivered. You may fancy the amount of rest and sleep we got during that period, seeing that we lived in front of the cannon, many of them only a few yards away, while the Germans with clock-work regularity pelted us with shells from behind. If you want to know what a real headache is like, or to experience the pleasure of every nerve in your body jumping about like so many mad cats, take the shilling, and spend a week or two near the next position we hope to capture.

"All things come to an end, and at last we finished our sixteen days Limbo (Purgatory is not near enough to Hell!) and marched back to the rest camp with tongues, to vary

the metaphor, hanging out for sleep. That night, a villainous enemy airman dropped bombs close to our tents, and the following day the guns shelled us, far back as we were. We must be a bad lot, for 'there is no rest for the wicked,' they say. For once my heart stood still with fear, not so much for myself as for the poor men. There we were on the side of a hill, four regiments crowded together, our only protection the canvas walls of the tents, with big shells creeping nearer and nearer.

"Orders had been given to scatter, but it takes time to disperse some 4,000 men, and one well-aimed shell would play havoc in such a crowd. Forgive me for mentioning this little incident. I want to do so in gratitude and to bring out the wonderful love and tenderness of our Divine Lord for His own Irish soldiers, not to claim the smallest credit for myself. I had brought the Ciborium to my tent after Mass, as the men were coming to Confession and Holy Communion all the day. Human beings could not help us then, but He, who stilled the tempest, could do so easily. There was only time for one earnest 'Lord, save my poor boys,' for at any moment the camp might be shambles full of dead and dying, before I rushed out into the open. As I did, a shell landed a few feet behind an officer, sending him spinning, but he jumped up unhurt. A moment more, down came a second, right into the middle of a group of men, and, miracle of miracles, failed to explode. A third burst so close to another party I was sure half were killed, though, I must confess, I never saw dead men run so fast before. And so it went on, first on one side, then on another, but, at the end of the half hour's bombardment, not a single man of the four regiments had been hit, even slightly.

"The chances of a good night's rest were at an end, for we had to turn out to sleep, as best we could, under the hedges and trees of the surrounding country. It was a big loss to the men, as once the attack (which was due in three days) began, there was little chance of closing an eye. We priests say a prayer at the end of our Office asking the Lord to grant *noctem quietam* (a peaceful night). I never fully

appreciated this prayer till now, and have said it more than once lately with heart-felt earnestness.

"These few days were busy ones for us, Fr. Browne and myself. The men knew they were preparing for death, and availed themselves fully of the opportunities we were able to give them. Fortunately the weather was gloriously fine, so there was no difficulty about Mass in the open. There was a general cleaning up and polishing of souls, some of them not too shiny, a General Communion on two days for all the men and officers, with the usual rosary and prayers each evening, consoling for us, because we felt the men had done their best, and the future might be safely left in the hands of the great and merciful Judge.

"I fancy the feelings of most of us were the same: awe, not a little fear, and a big longing to have it all over. We knew the seriousness of the task before us, for Wytschaete Hill, the key of the whole position, was regarded, even by the General Staff, as almost impregnable, and the German boast was that it would never be taken. Without detracting one bit from the dash and bravery of our Irish lads, which won unstinted praise from everyone—'The best show I have seen since I came to France,' said Sir D. Haig—full credit must be given to the artillery for pounding the defences to dust, without which our troops would still be on this side of the 300 ft. hill, instead of a couple of miles on the other side. Everyone felt the losses would be severe, if not colossal, and, as we sat on our hill and gazed down into the valley beyond, crammed with roaring guns, and watched the shells bursting in hundreds, knowing the moment was near for us to march down into that hell of fire and smoke, it was small wonder if many a stout heart quaked, and thoughts flew to the dear ones at home, which one hardly hoped to see again.

"There were many little, touching incidents during these days; one, especially, I shall not easily forget. When the men had left the field after the evening devotions I noticed a group of three young boys, brothers I think, still kneeling, saying another rosary. They knew it was probably their

last meeting on earth and they seemed to cling to one another for mutual comfort and strength, and instinctively turned to the Blessed Mother to help them in their hour of need. There they knelt as if they were alone and unobserved, their hands clasped and faces turned towards heaven, with such a look of beseeching earnestness that the Mother of Mercy surely must have heard their prayer: 'Holy Mary pray for us now—at the hour of death. Amen.' "

In a subsequent letter (25th July) Fr. Doyle refers to some of the talks which he gave to his men during these days. So the passage may be inserted here. "Before the last big battle," he writes, "I give the men a few talks about Heaven, where I hope many of them are now. I have the satisfaction of knowing that what I said helped the poor fellows a good deal, and made them face the coming dangers with a stouter heart. The man of whom I told you last year, who said he 'did not care a d—— for all the b—— German shells, (please excuse language), because he was with the priest that morning,' expressed in a forcible manner what many another felt, that when all is said and done, a man's religion is his biggest (and only true) consolation, and the source of real courage. I reminded them of the saying of the Blessed Curé d'Ars: 'When we get to Heaven and see all the happiness which is to be ours for ever, we shall wonder why we wanted to remain even one day on earth.' God hides these things from our eyes, for if we saw now 'the things God has prepared for those that love Him,' life on earth would be absolutely unlivable, and so, I said, the man who falls in the charge is not the loser but immensely the gainer; is *not* the unlucky one but the fortunate and blessed. You should have seen how the poor chaps drank in every word, for rough and ignorant as they are, they are full of Faith; though I fear their conception of an ideal Heaven, for some at least, would be a place of unlimited drinks and no closing time. There was a broad smile when I told them so!"

"On Wednesday night, June 6th," continues Fr. Doyle, "we moved off, so as to be in position for the attack at 3.10 a. m. on Thursday morning, the Feast of Corpus Christi!

I got to the little temporary chapel at the rear of our trenches soon after twelve, and tried to get a few moments' sleep before beginning Mass at one, a hopeless task, you may imagine, as the guns had gone raging mad. I could not help thinking would this be my last Mass, though I really never had any doubt the good God would continue to protect me in the future, as He had done in the past, and I was quite content to leave myself in His hands, since He knows what is best for us all."

It was 11.50 when Fr. Browne and Fr. Doyle reached the little sand-bag chapel which they had used when holding the line. There they lay down for an hour's rest on two stretchers borrowed from the huge pile waiting near by for the morrow's bloody work. Leaving their servant lying fast asleep through sheer exhaustion, the two chaplains got up at 1 a. m. and prepared the altar. Fr. Doyle said Mass first and was served by Fr. Browne, who, not having yet made his Last Vows, renewed his Vows at the Mass, as he always did at home on Corpus Christi. It was surely a weird and solemn Renovation. While Fr. Browne unvested after his own Mass and packed up the things, Fr. Doyle and his servant (now awake) prepared breakfast. At 2.30 the two chaplains put on their battle kit and made for their respective aid posts. Up near the front line, along the hedgerows, the battalions of the 48th Brigade were massed in support position. Their task was not to attack, but to follow up and consolidate and, should need arise, to help the leading brigades. "As I walked up to my post at the advanced dressing station," says Fr. Doyle, "I prayed for that peace of a perfect trust which seems to be so pleasing to our Lord." And he repeated to himself the verses of a little leaflet which a friend had sent to him when he first became chaplain:

Oh! for the peace of a perfect trust,
My loving God, in Thee;
Unwavering faith that never doubts
Thou choosest best for me.

In this spirit, in which he had so often schooled himself during his years of spiritual struggle, he waited for the coming crash of battle.

"It wanted half an hour," he continues, "to zero time—the phrase used for the moment of attack. The guns had ceased firing, to give their crews a breathing space before the storm of battle broke; for a moment at least there was peace on earth and a calm which was almost more trying than the previous roar to us who knew what was coming. A prisoner told us that the enemy knew we were about to attack, but did not expect it for another couple of days. I pictured to myself our men, row upon row waiting in the darkness for the word to charge, and on the other side the Germans in their trenches and dug-outs, little thinking that seventeen huge mines were laid under their feet, needing only a spark to blow them into eternity. The tension of waiting was terrific, the strain almost unbearable. One felt inclined to scream out and send them warning. But all I could do was to stand on top of the trench and give them Absolution, trusting to God's mercy to speed it so far.

"Even now I can scarcely think of the scene which followed without trembling with horror. Punctually to the second at 3.10 a. m. there was a deep muffled roar; the ground in front of where I stood rose up, as if some giant had wakened from his sleep and was bursting his way through the earth's crust, and then I saw seventeen huge columns of smoke and flames shoot hundreds of feet into the air, while masses of clay and stones, tons in weight, were hurled about like pebbles. I never before realized what an earthquake was like, for not only did the ground quiver and shake, but actually rocked backwards and forwards, so that I kept on my feet with difficulty.

"Later on I examined one of the mine craters, an appalling sight, for I knew that many a brave man, torn and burnt by the explosion, lay buried there. If you expand very considerably the old Dalkey quarry near the railway and dig it twice as deep, you will have some idea of the size of one of

our mine craters, twenty of which were blown along the front of our attack.[22]

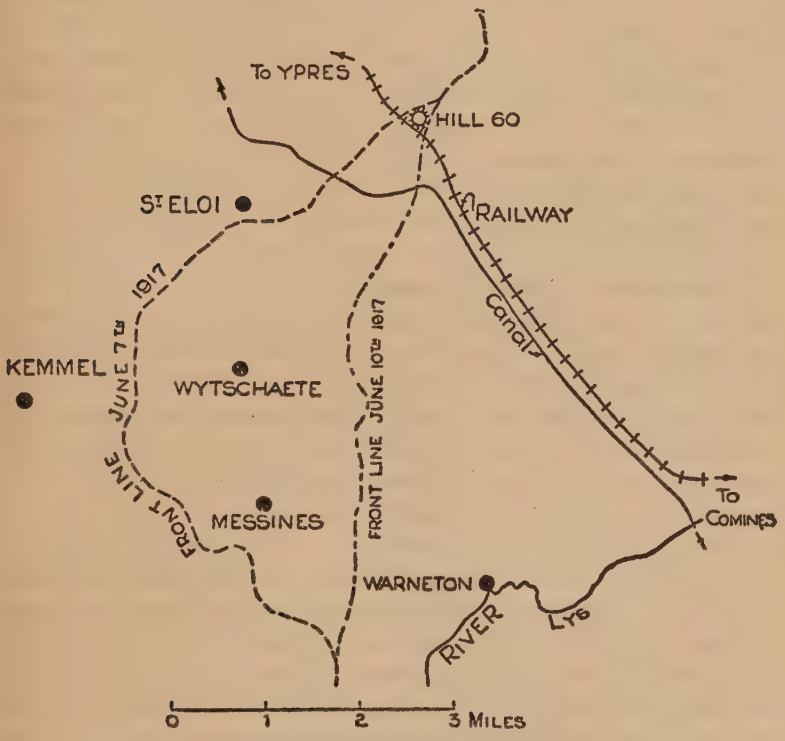
"Before the débris of the mines had begun to fall to earth, the 'wild Irish' were over the top of the trenches and on the enemy, though it seemed certain they must be killed to a man by the falling avalanche of clay. Even a stolid English Colonel standing near was moved to enthusiasm: 'My God!' he said, 'what soldiers! They fear neither man nor devil!' Why should they? They had made their peace with God. He had given them His own Sacred Body to eat that morning, and they were going out now to face death, as only Irish Catholic lads can do, confident of victory and cheered by the thought that the reward of Heaven was theirs. Nothing could stop such a rush, and so fast was the advance that the leading files actually ran into the barrage of our own guns, and had to retire.

"Meanwhile hell itself seemed to have been let loose. With the roar of the mines came the deafening crash of our guns, hundreds of them. This much I can say: never before, even in this war, have so many batteries, especially of heavy pieces, been concentrated on one objective, and how the Germans were able to put up the resistance they did was a marvel to everybody, for our shells fell like hailstones. In a few moments they took up the challenge, and soon things on our side became warm and lively.

"In a short time the wounded began to come in, and a number of German prisoners, many of them wounded, also. I must confess my heart goes out to these unfortunate soldiers, whose sufferings have been terrific. I can't share the general sentiment that 'they deserve what they get and one better.' For after all, are they not children of the same

[22]"I saw the seventeen mines go up and earth and flame gush out of them as though the fires of hell had risen. A terrible sight, as the work of men against their fellow creatures. . . . It was the signal for 750 of our heavy guns and 2,000 of our field guns to open fire; and behind a moving wall of bursting shells, English, Irish, and New Zealand soldiers moved forward in dense waves."—Sir Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*, 1920, p. 383. These 17 (or 19?) mines took 18 months to construct; 8,000 yards of galleries were driven and a million pounds of explosive used. The reverberations of the explosion were heard in England. The largest mine-crater had a diameter of 140 yards.

loving Saviour Who said: 'Whatever you do to one of these My least ones you do it to Me.' I try to show them any little kindness I can, getting them a drink, taking off the boots from smashed and bleeding feet, or helping to dress their wounds, and more than once I have seen the eyes of these rough men fill with tears as I bent over them, or felt my hand squeezed in gratitude.



WYTSCHAETE AND MESSINES.

"My men did not go over in the first wave; they were held in reserve to move up as soon as the first objective was taken, hold the position and resist any counter attack. Most of them were waiting behind a thick sand-bag wall not far from the advanced dressing station where I was, which enabled me to keep an eye upon them.

"The shells were coming over thick and fast now, and at last, what I expected and feared happened. A big 'crump' hit the wall fair and square, blew three men into the field 50 yards away, and buried five others who were in a small dug-out. For a moment I hesitated, for the horrible sight fairly knocked the 'starch' out of me and a couple more 'crumps' did not help to restore my courage.

"I climbed over the trench and ran across the open, as abject a coward as ever walked on two legs, till I reached the three dying men, and then the 'perfect trust' came back to me and I felt no fear. A few seconds sufficed to absolve and anoint my poor boys, and I jumped to my feet, only to go down on my face faster than I got up, as an express train from Berlin roared by.

"The five buried men were calling for help, but the others standing around seemed paralysed with fear, all save one sergeant, whose language was worthy of the occasion and rose to a noble height of sublimity. He was working like a Trojan, tearing the sand-bags aside, and welcomed my help with a mingled blessing and curse. The others joined in with pick and shovel, digging and pulling, till the sweat streamed from our faces, and the blood from our hands, but we got three of the buried men out alive, the other two had been killed by the explosion.[23]

"Once again I had evidence of the immense confidence our men have in the priest. It was quite evident they were rapidly becoming demoralized, as the best of troops will who have to remain inactive under heavy shell fire. Little groups were running from place to place for greater shelter, and the officers seemed to have lost control. I walked along the line of men, crouching behind the sand-bag wall, and was amused to see the ripple of smiles light up the terrified lads' faces,

[23] Fr. Doyle did not forget his helper. A little later he was able to write: "You may be interested to hear that the Sergeant of whom I spoke in my long letter, 'him of the ruddy language,' has been awarded the D. C. M. (Distinguished Conduct Medal), the private's equivalent of the M. C. I told the Colonel of his coolness and fine work in digging out the five buried men, and recommended him for a decoration, which I am glad to say was accepted at Head Quarters. The poor chap is very proud of his medal, which I told him he won by his eloquent language."

(so many are mere boys) as I went by. By the time I got back again the men were laughing and chatting as if all danger was miles away, for quite unintentionally, I had given them courage by walking along without my gas mask or steel helmet, both of which I had forgotten in my hurry.

"When the regiment moved forward, the Doctor and I went with it. By this time the 'impregnable' ridge was in our hands and the enemy retreating down the far side. I spent the rest of that memorable day wandering over the battle-field looking for the wounded, and had the happiness of helping many a poor chap, for shells were flying about on all sides."

"As I knew there was no chance of saying Mass next morning, I had taken the precaution of bringing several Consecrated Particles with me, so that I should not be deprived of Holy Communion. It was the Feast of Corpus Christi and I thought of the many processions of the Blessed Sacrament which were being held at that moment all over the world. Surely there never was a stranger one than mine that day, as I carried the God of Consolation in my unworthy arms over the blood-stained battle-field. There was no music to welcome His coming save the scream of a passing shell; the flowers that strewed His path were the broken, bleeding bodies of those for whom He had once died; and the only Altar of Repose He could find was the heart of one who was working for Him alone, striving in a feeble way to make Him some return for all His love and goodness.

"I shall make no attempt to describe the battle-field. Thank God, our casualties were extraordinarily light, but there was not a yard of ground on which a shell had not pitched, which made getting about very laborious, sliding down one crater and climbing up the next, and also increased the difficulty of finding the wounded.[24]

"Providence certainly directed my steps on two occasions at least. I came across one young soldier horribly mutilated, all his intestines hanging out, but quite conscious and able

[24] As a result of having to wear his boots so continuously, Fr. Doyle was suffering from very severe "blood blisters" on his feet. This must have made his climbing up and down shell-holes an excruciating torture.

to speak to me. He lived long enough to receive the Last Sacraments, and died in peace. Later on in the evening I was going in a certain direction when something made me turn back when I saw, in the distance, a man being carried on a stretcher. He belonged to the artillery, and had no chance of seeing a priest for a long time, but he must have been a good lad, for Mary did not forget him 'at the hour of his death.'

"The things I remember best of that day of twenty-four hours' work are: the sweltering heat, a devouring thirst which comes from the excitement of battle, physical weakness from want of food, and a weariness and footsoreness which I trust will pay a little at least of St. Peter's heavy score against me.

"Friday was a repetition of the previous day. I made a glorious breakfast, in a shell-hole, off a piece of chocolate, a couple of biscuits picked up on the ground—I wiped the clay off first as the Belgians may want it again—and washed the lot down with a draught of water from my bottle. I am certain you did not enjoy your bacon and eggs one half as much as I did my 'hard tack' and chocolate. Later on I came in for a cup of tea—without milk, which really spoils good tea—so I did not do so badly.

"Fighting was over for the moment, as we were hard at work bringing up the guns to support the infantry in their advanced positions. Nothing of very great interest happened during the next two days, and I had only one fairly narrow escape from an eight-inch shell, which got so terrified at the sight of a Jesuit in khaki that it exploded. I threw my 'tin hat,' as the Tommies call the helmet, on the ground and tried to crawl under it, evidently without complete success, judging by the clods of earth which came whacking on my back till I was pretty well black and blue. Brother Fritz certainly hammered some breath out of me, but failed miserably to damp my good spirits, or diminish my trust in the Sacred Heart."

Early on Sunday morning the exhausted Battalions were relieved. After the battle the men marched back by easy stages to the rear for a few weeks of rest and training—the

only rest which was allowed to the 16th Division in the two years and three months that it was in the field.[25]

(6.) HIS LAST SERMON

It was not so much a rest, however, that the unfortunate Irishmen were given, as an intense course of training for a new offensive. "The 16th Division," says General Hickie, "which had made a great and glorious name for itself both at Wytschaete and on the Somme, was specially applied for by the Commander of the Fifth Army in view of the impending third battle of Ypres. We were withdrawing from the line and given three weeks for special training. The whole Division was in splendid order and as smart and full of military ardour as it was possible for any body of men to be. Brigades took it in turn to work in an area which we had laid out as a model of the German trenches to be attacked. The other Brigades carried on ordinary training and were in billets near St. Omer." [26]

"After the battle," writes Fr. Doyle on 26th June, "we marched back to the rear by easy stages, bidding good-bye to Locre and the Convent where we had spent nine months, not unpleasant ones in the beginning, though lively towards the end. Looking back on the terrible winter we went through, I often wonder what I should have done, were it not for the room which the good Sisters put at my disposal when I got back from the trenches and which gave me a chance of a decent rest and sleep. I don't suppose we shall ever see the convent again; but the memory of the kindness shown us all, myself especially, as if I were part of the community, will not easily be forgotten." [27]

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[25] Wytschaete was captured by the 16th (Irish) and 36th (North Irish) Divisions, Messines by the New Zealand Divisions. 7,200 prisoners were taken, 67 guns, 94 trench-mortars, 294 machine guns.

[26] The 48th Brigade was distributed round Tatinghem, St. Martin au Laërt, Rubrouck and Zeggers-Cappel. Fr. Doyle seems for some or most of the time to have lived near this last-named village. See map p. 474.

[27] The Convent was completely destroyed in the German advance of April, 1918.

"We spent the rest of the week billeted in farm houses, the weather being ideal, even if on the hot side, and the peaceful country seeming a paradise after the din of battle. It was only when the strain was taken off that we realised how utterly tired we were; but rest had come at long last and we took it night and day. Then just as we were settling down to enjoy a well-earned repose urgent orders reached us to return at once to the trenches. I shall not easily forget that day's march (Sunday, 17th June). The heat was terrific and the road long and hilly. The men stuck it magnificently, in fact too much so, for several of them fainted from exhaustion and all were fairly done up by the time camp was reached. That night, at one a. m., word was received that the order was cancelled and that we were to return to the place we had come from. Some one had blundered; or, perhaps, it had dawned upon the minds of those in power that the endurance of even Irish soldiers has a limit.

"The next few days we spent marching back further and further to the rear. We are now settled down in quite a nice part of France, very comfortable in fine farmhouses; best of all, here we stay for some weeks at least, resting and training. It is delightfully peaceful and quiet; and if the weather did give us a good drenching on the march, it is now on its best behaviour—plenty of sun with a cool breeze."

"My present habitation," he writes a month later "is a tiny room in an equally tiny cottage, the only big thing in it (barring the fleas) being the bed which occupies nine-tenths of the space. A beautiful dung-heap under my window sends me alternately odoriferous whiffs and savage mosquitoes. But one can cheerfully put up with these small inconveniences instead of German shot and shell.

"Our week of special training [28] contained nothing of interest, except that my two battalions were again very far apart and much scattered. However I did not object to this, as riding about the country in this beautiful weather was quite

[28] That is, the turn of the 48th Brigade to practise on the model trenches, alluded to above by General Hickie.

enjoyable and I could arrange my own hours as I pleased.

"An amusing incident took place the first morning we arrived. One old French lady was horrified, on looking out of her window, to see a column of soldiers in extended order advancing calmly through her field of oats. Arming herself with a stout stick, she rushed out and started to wallop the leading files, declaring that they might trample on her but not on her precious corn. Hearing a noise behind her, madame turned round, only to see six huge tanks walking up the hill, literally making hay of her corn-field. With a scream of rage the old lady made for the tanks, waving her stick and defying them to come further at their peril; and it was only when two of them made for her (in fun) that she realised the battle was a one-sided affair and retreated to her fort. The English Government had warned the people that this ground would be needed for manoeuvres, had given them full compensation and told them they would sow their crops at their own risk; however, like true French people, they wanted to get the money and the corn as well."

Just at this time everyone was talking of unknown things being planned for a Hush Army somewhere in the dunes, and there was great excitement.[29] One day Fr. Doyle chanced upon a fresh unsoiled copy of the "Daily Mail" for a Friday in October 1914, describing the German capture of Roulers. A glance at the scare headings on its front page suggested a hoax on the mess of the 2nd Dublins. Next day, which was a Friday (probably 20th July) he managed to get into the mess before the others. He substituted the old copy and abstracted the new one, which he proceeded to read while waiting the turn of events. The first to come in was Major Smithwick who, seeing the heading, called out: "They've begun the big advance. Roulers is captured." At once there was great excitement, and all crowded round to get a peep at the stirring news.

[29] British troops relieved the French on the narrow strip of sandy coast near Nieuport. It had been planned that these troops, in coöperation with the Navy, should take part in a Flanders campaign when the advance from the Ypres front had developed. But the Germans upset the scheme by attacking on July 10th and driving the British back across the Yser Canal.

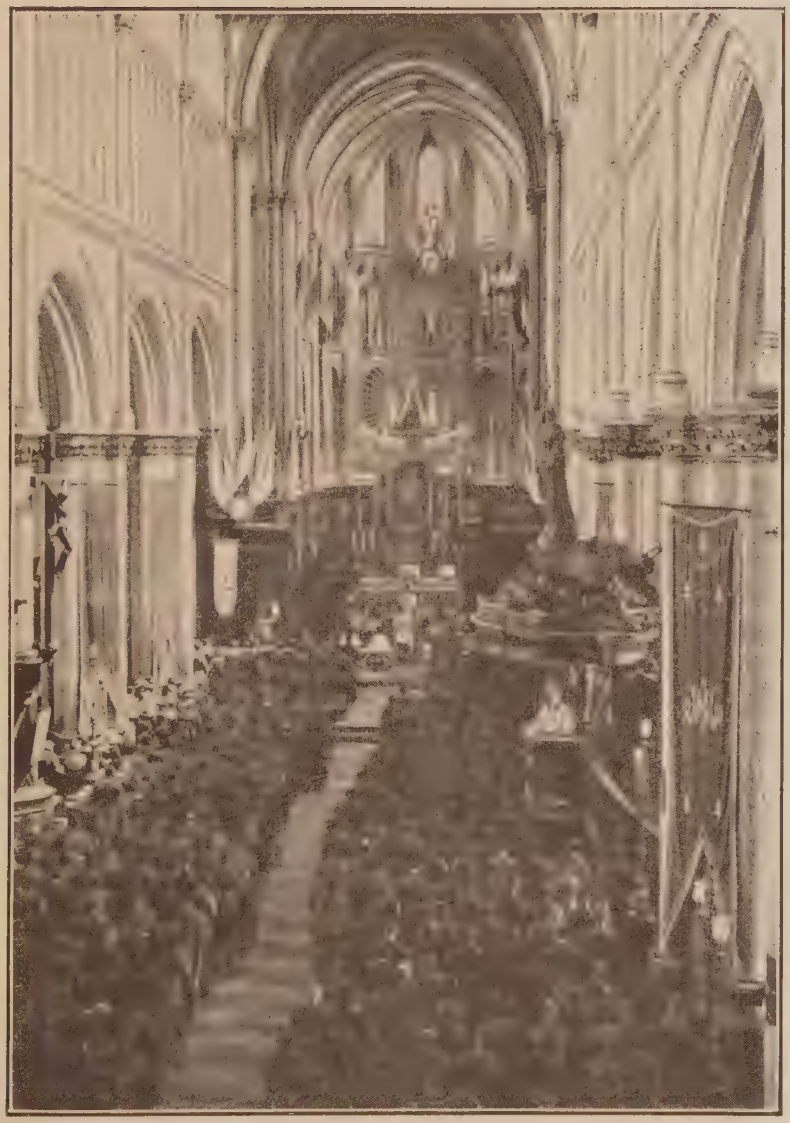
But after some moments there were puzzled exclamations. "Why, it's the Germans who have taken Roulers." "That's not Friday's paper"; "yes it is." Then the fraud was discovered, and its author was discovered behind the authentic paper. That was Fr. Doyle's last practical joke.

During this interval Fr. Doyle preached his last sermon. The new Bishop of Arras, Boulogne and St. Omer,[30] Mgr. Julien, was to make his formal entry into St. Omer on Saturday, 14th July, and to be present next day at the conclusion of the Novena to our Lady of Miracles. Through the instrumentality of Fr. Browne, with the ready compliance of General Hickie, it was arranged that there should be a church parade in honour of the Bishop on Sunday, 15th. About 2,500 men came down. Fr. Browne said Mass and Fr. Doyle preached. The ceremony, which was most impressive and successful, has fortunately been described in a letter of Fr. Browne's, written on 22nd July from St. Martin au Laërt:

"I arrived at the Cathedral about 11 o'clock (says Fr. Browne), and was in despair to find that the Pontifical High Mass was not yet finished. Our people are so punctual and the French so regardless of time-tables that I was sure there would be confusion and delay, when our 2,000 Catholics would begin to arrive. But it was not to be. Quietly and wonderfully quickly the Mass ended, and the people went out to watch the Bishop go back in procession to his house close by. I was relieved to see that neither he nor any of the priests unvested. Then Fr. Doyle and I had to try to clear away the hundred or so people who remained and the other hundred or so people who came wandering in for the last Mass—which for the day was to be ours. 'Donnez place, s'il vous plaît, aux soldats qui vont arriver,' [31] I went round saying to everyone. They moved from the great aisle and got into the side-chapels, leaving the transepts and aisles free. Many refused to do this,

[30] On the occasion of the Concordat (1801) the three dioceses of Arras, Saint-Omer and Boulogne were merged into one. The Cathedral of the joint diocese at Arras (18th century structure replacing that destroyed during the Revolution) was at this time (July, 1917) already in ruins. The Basilica of Notre Dame (13–15th century) at St. Omer was a cathedral from 1559 to 1801.

[31] Make room, please, for the soldiers who are coming.



MASS IN ST. OMER CHURCH, 15th JULY, 1917.

Fr. Browne beginning Mass ; Mgr. Julien kneeling behind him ;
Fr. Doyle in the pulpit ; 2nd Batt. Dublin Fusiliers in Nave.

Made in Ireland.

when with pious exaggeration I said, 'Presque 3,000 soldats Irlandais vont arriver tout à l'heure.[32] And lo! they were coming. Through all the various doors they came, the 9th Dubs. marching in by the great western door, the 8th Dubs. through the beautiful southern door, through which St. Louis was the first to pass just 700 years ago, the 2nd Dubs. coming into the northern aisle and making their way up to the northern transept. Rank after rank the men poured in until the vast nave was one solid mass of khaki with the red caps of General Hickie and his staff and the Brigadiers in front. Then up the long nave at a quick clanking march came the Guard of Honour. Every button of its men, every badge, shone and shone again; their belts were scrubbed till not even the strictest inspection could reveal the slightest stain, and their fixed bayonets only wanted the sun to show how they could flash. Up they came, and with magnificent precision took their places on either side of the altar. I was just leaving the sacristy to begin Mass when I saw the Bishop's procession arriving. He had promised to come only after the sermon, but here he was at the beginning of the ceremony, making everything complete. Of course, I saw nothing, being engaged in saying Mass, but those who did said it was a wonderful sight. The beautiful altar, standing at the crossing of the transepts and backed by the long arches of the apse and choir, was for the feast surrounded by a lofty throne bearing the statue of our Lady of Miracles. The sides were banked up high with palms; then the Guard of Honour standing rigidly in two lines on either side; lastly the Bishop in his beautiful purple robes on his throne. From the pulpit Fr. Doyle directed the singing of the hymns, and then, after the Gospel, he preached. I knew he *could* preach, but I had hardly expected that anyone could speak as he spoke then. First of all he referred to the Bishop's coming, and very, very tactfully spoke of the terrible circumstances of the time. Next he went on to speak of our Lady

[32] About 3,000 Irish soldiers are just coming. The local St. Omer paper (16th July, 1917) omits all reference to the nationality of the congregation. We read that "2,500 soldats catholiques britanniques" were present and that the Mass was served by "deux officers britanniques."

and the Shrine to which we had come. Gradually the story was unfolded; he spoke wonderfully of the coming of the Old Irish Brigade in their wanderings over the Low Countries. It was here that he touched daringly, but ever so cleverly, on Ireland's part in the war. Fighting for Ireland and not fighting for Ireland, or rather fighting for Ireland through another. Then he passed on to Daniel O'Connell's time as a schoolboy at St. Omer and his visit to the Shrine.[33] It certainly was very eloquent. Everyone spoke most highly of it afterwards, the men particularly, *they* were delighted.[34]

"After the sermon Mass went on. At the Sanctus I heard the subdued order, 'Guard of Honour, 'shun!' There was a click as rifles and feet came to position together. Then as the Bishop came from his throne to kneel before the altar, twelve little boys in scarlet soutanes, with scarlet sashes over their lace surplices, appeared with lighted torches and knelt behind his Lordship. At the second bell came the command, 'Guard of Honour, slope rifles!' And then as I bent over the Host, I heard, 'Present arms!' There was the quick click, click, click, and silence, till, as I genuflected, from the organ-gallery rang out the loud clear notes of the buglers sounding the General's Salute."

At the end of the Mass the Bishop in a neat little speech thanked the men for the great honour they had paid him. He was especially struck, he said, by the fact that most of them had marched a long way (some nearly ten kilometres) to at-

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[33] [O'Connell and his brother were pupils in the English College at St. Omer from January, 1791 until August, 1792.—Houston, *Daniel O'Connell, his Early Life and Journal*, 1906, pp. 32, 40.]

[34] [The sermon appealed to the men by its more or less historical reference to the Irish Brigade that had come there three hundred years before The men of the 8th Dublins declared that Fr. Doyle "ought to get into Jim Larkin's shoes!" It appealed to others for a different reason. General Ramsay (a Protestant) stated afterwards that it was one of the most tactful and impressive sermons he had ever heard, and General Hickie said that he was intensely pleased with the way in which "dangerous" topics had been handled without offending anyone. It certainly required some diplomatic skill to appeal to Irish regiments in the British Army by evoking memories of the Irish Brigade which fought against England. Nor was it easy, without hurting English susceptibilities, to convey the fact that the Irish soldiers who were listening were fighting for what they believed was Ireland's cause as well as Belgium's. Fr. Doyle succeeded.]

tend, and he asked those of his flock who were present to learn a lesson from the grand spirit and deep faith of the Irish soldiers. "With all my heart," said the Bishop, "I am going to give my blessing to you, officers and men of the British Army, children of our sister-nation, Catholic Ireland. . . . May God, by a just compensation for sacrifices accepted in common, bring to an end the interior conflicts which rend the nations. And if there still remain legitimate aspirations of the Irish people to be satisfied, I bless your hopes and ask of God their realisation."

The ceremony concluded by a march past, with bands playing, in front of the Episcopal Palace. The Bishop stood on the steps of his house, beaming as he replied to the "eyes right" of each company as it passed him. "The whole thing," remarks Fr. Doyle, "made a great impression. People could not help contrasting in this respect the respect and honour shown by the British Army with the narrow-minded persecution of the French Government."

This last sermon of Fr. Doyle will serve as a final proof—if such be needed—that the man, whose inner life has been portrayed in previous chapters, was no awkward recluse or unpractical pietist. He was full of lovable human qualities; especially conspicuous was his unselfish thoughtfulness which always seemed so natural, so intertwined with playful spontaneity, that one came to take it for granted. He had a wonderful influence over others and knew how to win the human heart because he had learnt the Master's secret of drawing all to himself. He could, as we have just seen, preach persuasively when occasion demanded; but his real sermon was his own life. And from this pulpit he spoke alike to Protestants and Catholics. "For fifteen months," writes Dr. C. Buchanan (9th Sept., 1917), "Fr. Doyle and I worked together out here, generally sharing the same dug-outs and billets, so we became fast friends, I acting as medical officer to his First Battalion. Often I envied him his coolness and courage in the face of danger: for this alone his men would have loved him, but he had other sterling qualities, which we all recognised only too well. He was beloved and respected, not only by those of his

own Faith, but equally by Protestants, to which denomination I belong. To illustrate this—Poor Captain Eaton, before going into action last September, asked Fr. Doyle to do what was needful if anything happened to him, as he should feel happier if he had a friend to bury him. Captain Eaton was one of many whom Fr. Doyle and I placed in their last resting place with a few simple prayers. For his broad-mindedness we loved him. He seldom, if ever, preached, but he set us a shining example of a Christian life." [35]

A similar testimony is eloquently conveyed in a little incident recorded by Fr. Doyle in a letter which he wrote to his father on 25th July, 1917. He wrote it seated on a comfortable roadside bank under a leafy hedge, listening, during this intermezzo from the dreadful drama of war, to the nightingales singing in the Bois du Rossignol near by.[36] "While I was writing," he says, "one of my men, belonging to the Irish Rifles, of which I have charge also, passed by. We chatted for a few minutes and then he went on, but came back shortly with a steaming bowl of coffee which he had bought for me. 'I am not one of your flock, Father,' he said, 'but we have all a great liking for you.' And then he added: 'If all the officers treated us as you do, our lives would be different.' I was greatly touched by the poor lad's thoughtfulness, and impressed by what he said: a kind word often goes further than one thinks, and one loses nothing by remembering that even soldiers are human beings and have feelings like anyone else."

There lies the secret of Fr. Doyle's popularity—his Christ-like *democracy*. With him there was neither Jew nor Gentile, neither officer nor private; all were men, human beings, souls for whom Christ died. Every man was equally precious to him; beneath every mud-begrimed, unkempt figure he discerned a human personality.[37] He would risk ten lives, if he had them, to bring help and comfort to a dying soldier, no

[35] Once when Dr. Buchanan was unwell and there were no blankets to lie upon in the damp dug-out, Fr. Doyle lay flat, face downwards, on the ground, and made the doctor lie upon him.

[36] There is a wood with this name a few miles north-west of Nordausques.

[37] Hence too he often reverently gathered up in a handkerchief and buried the remains of what had once enshrined a human soul.

matter who he was. Once he rushed up to a wounded Ulsterman and knelt beside him. "Ah, Father," said the man, "I don't belong to your Church." "No," replied Fr. Doyle, "but you belong to my God." To Fr. Doyle all were brothers to be ministered unto. "He that will be first among you shall be your servant, even as the Son of Man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a redemption for many." (*S. Matthew* 20. 27.)

(7.) THE BATTLE OF YPRES

"We shall have desperate fighting soon," wrote Fr. Doyle in a private letter dated 25th July, "but I have not the least fear, on the contrary, a great joy in the thought that I shall be able to make a real offering of my life to God, even if He does not think that poor life worth taking." To avoid causing anxiety, he said nothing to his father about the impending battle until the first phase was over. On 12th and 14th August he sent home in his last two letters a long budget or diary which will enable us to describe, chiefly in his own words, the events which occurred up to that date.

By way of preface we shall first transcribe from the letter a little story which, in spite of its humorous setting, has a serious application to his own hard life.[38] "Help comes to one in strange ways," he writes, "and the remembrance of a quaint old story has lightened for me the weight of a heavy pair of boots over many a mile of muddy road. The story may interest you:

"In the good old days of yore, a holy hermit built him a cell in a spot a few miles from the well, so that he might have a little act of penance to offer to Almighty God each day by trampling across the hot sand and back again with his pitcher. All went gaily for a while, and if the holy man did lose many a drop of honest sweat, he knew he was

[38] The story is taken (with embellishments) from the *Spiritual Meadows* of Johannes Moschus († 619), as cited in Rodriguez, *Christian and Religious Perfection* ii. 1, 21 (Eng. trans. ii. 77).

piling up sacks of treasure in Heaven, and his heart was light. But—oh! that little 'but' which spoils so many things —but though the spirit was willing, the sun was very warm, the sand most provokingly hot, the pitcher the devil and all of a weight, and the road seemingly longer each day. 'It is a bit too much of a good joke,' thought the man of God, 'to tramp these miles day in and day out, with my old bones clanking like a traction engine. Why not move the cell to the edge of the water, save time (and much bad language probably) and have cool water in abundance, and a dry hair shirt on my back?'

"Away home he faced for the last time with his brimming water jar, kicking the sand about in sheer delight, for the morrow would see him on the trek, and an end to his weary trudging, when suddenly he heard a voice, an angel's voice he knew it to be, counting slowly 'One, two, three, four.' The hermit stopped in wonder and so did the voice, but at the next steps he took the counting began again, 'Five, six, seven.' Falling on his knees, the old man prayed that he might know the meaning of this wonder. 'I am the angel of God,' came the answer, 'counting up each step which long ago you offered up to my Lord and Master, so that not a single one may lose its reward. Don't be so foolish as to throw away the immense merit you are gaining, by moving your cell to the water's edge, for know that in the eyes of the heavenly court nothing is small which is done or borne for the love of God.'

"That very night, down came the hermit's hut, and before morning broke he had built it again five miles *further* from the well. For all I know, he is merrily tramping still, backwards and forwards across the burning sand, very hot and tired no doubt, but happy in the thought that the recording angel is busy counting each step.

"I do not think I need point the moral. But I hope and pray that my own good angel is strong at arithmetic, and won't get mixed when he starts his long tote!"

To understand this little parable is to understand much of Fr. Doyle's life, his desire to emulate his angel guardian's

arithmetic as well as his inveterate habit of adding to, instead of subtracting from, the "hard things" of life.

We can now begin his record of these last terrible experiences.

30th July.

"For the past week we have been moving steadily up to the Front once more to face the hardships and horrors of another big push, which report says is to be the biggest effort since the War began. The blood-stained Ypres battlefield is to be the centre of the fight, with our left wing running down to the Belgian coast, from which it is hoped to drive the enemy and, perhaps, force him by a turning movement to fall back very far.

"The preparations are on a colossal scale, the mass of men and guns enormous. 'Success is certain' our Generals tell us, but I cannot help wondering what are the plans of the Great Leader, and what the result will be when He has issued His orders. This much is certain: the fight will be a desperate one, for our foe is not only brave, but clever and cunning, as we have learned to our cost.

"Mass in the open this morning, under a drizzling rain, was a trying, if edifying, experience. Colonel, officers and men knelt on the wet grass with the water trickling off them, while a happy if somewhat damp chaplain moved from rank to rank giving every man Holy Communion. Poor fellows: with all their faults God must love them dearly for their simple faith and love of their religion, and for the confident way in which they turn to Him for help in the hour of trial.

"One of my converts, received into the Church last night, made his First Holy Communion this morning under circumstances he will not easily forget. I see in the paper that 13,000 soldiers and officers have become Catholics since the War began, but I should say this number is much below the mark. Ireland's missionaries, the light-hearted lads who shoulder a rifle and swing along the muddy roads, have taught

many a man more religion, by their silent example, than he ever dreamed of before.[39]

"Many a time one's heart grows sick to think how few will ever see home and country again, for their pluck and daring have marked them down for the positions which only the Celtic dash can take: a post of honour, no doubt, but it means slaughter as well.

"We moved off at 10 p. m., a welcome hour in one way, as it means marching in the cool of the night instead of sweating under a blazing sun. Still when one has put in a long day of hard work, and legs and body are pretty well tired out already, the prospect of a stiff march is not too pleasant."

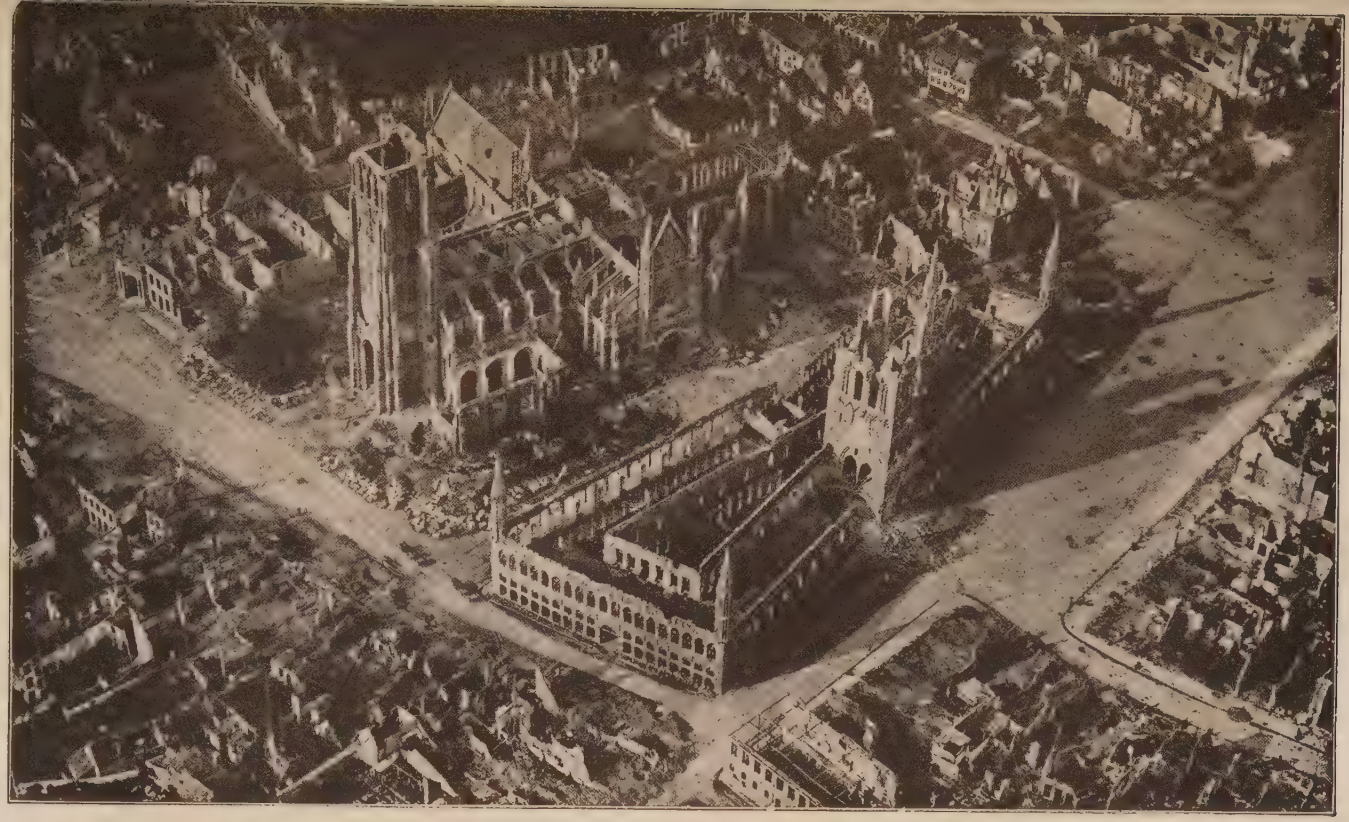
31st July.

"It was 1.30 a. m. when our first halting place was reached and as we march again at three, little time was wasted getting to sleep. It was the morning of July 31st, the Feast of St. Ignatius, a day dear to every Jesuit, but doubly so to the soldier sons of the soldier saint. Was it to be Mass or sleep? Nature said sleep, but grace won the day, and while the weary soldiers slumbered the Adorable Sacrifice was offered for them, that God would bless them in the coming fight and, if it were His Holy Will, bring them safely through it. Mass and thanksgiving over, a few precious moments of rest on the floor of the hut, and we have fallen into line once more.

"As we do, the dark clouds are lit up with red and golden flashes of light, the earth quivers with the simultaneous crash of thousands of guns and in imagination we can picture the miles of our trenches spring to life as the living stream of men pours over the top—the Third [40] Battle of Ypres has begun.

[39] As I transcribe these words of Fr. Doyle, there lies before me a letter from another chaplain: "The men are *wonderful*—I ought to write it in capitals—so cheerful and so patient amidst their *very* real sufferings. I refer to the Irish element in the battalion, for there is a *most* marked difference in the demeanour and conduct of the various groups. Now, I need hardly ask the origin of a particular group or individual; the attitude of mind, body and lips is sufficient for me."

[40] Fr. Doyle writes "Fourth." The first series of Ypres battles were fought from 19th Oct. to 22nd Nov., 1914; the second from 22nd April to 25th May,



Ruins of Ypres photographed from the air (end of 1916).
(Grand' Place on the right; Cloth Hall to its left; Cathedral further to the left).

"Men's hearts beat faster, and nerves seem to stretch and vibrate like harp strings, as we march steadily on, ever nearer and nearer towards the raging fight, on past battery after battery of huge guns and howitzers, belching forth shells which ten men could scarcely lift, on past the growing streams of motor ambulances, each with its sad burden of broken bodies, the first drops of that torrent of wounded which will pour along the road. I fancy not a few were wondering how long would it be till they were carried past in the same way, or was this the last march they would ever make till the final Roll Call on the Great Review Day.

"We were to be held in reserve for the opening stages of the battle, so we lay all that day (the 31st) in the open fields, ready to march at a moment's notice should things go badly at the Front. Bit by bit news of the fight came trickling in. The Jocks (15th Scottish Division) in front of us, had taken the first and second objective with little opposition, and were pushing on to their final goal. All was going well, and the steady stream of prisoners showed that, for once, Dame Rumour was not playing false. Our spirits rose rapidly in spite of the falling rain, for word reached us that we were to return to the camp for the night as our services would not be required. Then the sun of good news began to set, and ugly rumours to float about.

"The wily German was at his tricks again. Knowing that all his artillery positions were noted by our airmen and 'registered' for shelling, he had withdrawn his guns to new positions, leaving one behind to keep up a rapid fire and so deceive our gunners. Whether it was the impetuous Celtic dash that won the ground, or part of German strategy, the enemy centre gave way while the wings held firm. This trick

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1915; the third from 31st July to 10th Nov., 1917; the fourth in 1918. "The month of August 1917, the wettest known for twenty years, reduced the battle-field to a vast sea of mud, ground became impossible to manoeuvre, and the movement of guns, ammunition and stores became almost impossible. This factor, together with the skilful, elastic defence of the German Army, the numerous concrete pill-boxes used as machine-gun emplacements, and the succession of fierce counter-attacks, made the gain of each yard of ground, a most bitter struggle."—*The Immortal Salient* by Sir. Wm. Pulteney and Beatrix Brice, 1925, pp. 16 f.

has been played so often and so successfully one would imagine we should not have been caught napping again, but the temptation for victorious troops to rush into an opening is almost too strong to be resisted, and probably the real state of affairs on the wings was not known. The Scotties reached their objective, only to find they were the centre of a murderous fire from three sides, and, having beaten off repeated counter-attacks of the 'demoralized enemy,' were obliged to retire some distance. So far the Germans had not done too badly.

"It was nearly eight o'clock, and our dinner was simmering in the pot with a tempting odour, when the fatal telegram came: 'the battalion will move forward in support at once.' I was quite prepared for this little change of plans, having experienced such surprises before, and had taken the precaution of laying in a solid lunch early in the day. I did not hear a single growl from anyone, though it meant we had to set out for another march hungry and dinnerless, with the prospect of passing a second night without sleep. When I give my next nuns' retreat I think I shall try the experiment of a few supperless and bedless nights on them, just to see what they would say, and compare notes with the soldiers. The only disadvantage would be that I should be inundated with applications to give similar retreats in other convents, everyone being so delighted with the experiment, especially the good Mother Bursar who would simply coin money!

"On the road once more in strict fighting kit, the clothes we stood in, a rain coat, and a stout heart. A miserable night with a cold wind driving the drizzling rain into our faces and the ground underfoot being rapidly churned into a quagmire of slush and mud. I hope the Recording Angel will not be afraid of the weather and will not get as tired of counting the steps as I did: 'Ten thousand and one, ten thousand and two,'—a bit monotonous even with the memory of the old hermit to help one.

"The road was a sight never to be forgotten. On one side marched our column in close formation, on the other galloped by an endless line of ammunition waggons, extra guns hurry-

ing up to the Front, and motor lorries packed with stores of all kinds, while between the two flowed back the stream of empties and ambulance after ambulance filled with wounded and dying.

"In silence, save for the never-ceasing roar of the guns and the rumble of cart wheels, we marched on through the city of the dead, Ypres, not a little anxious, for a shower of shells might come at any minute. Ruin and desolation, desolation and ruin, is the only description I can give of a spot once the pride and glory of Belgium. The hand of war has fallen heavy on the city of Ypres; scarce a stone remains of the glorious Cathedral and equally famous Cloth Hall; the churches, a dozen of them, are piles of rubbish, gone are the convents, the hospitals and public buildings, and though many of the inhabitants are still there, their bodies lie buried in the ruins of their homes, and the smell of rotting corpses poisons the air. I have seen strange sights in the last two years, but this was the worst of all. Out again by the opposite gate of this stricken spot, which people say was not undeserving of God's chastisement, across the moat and along the road pitted all over with half filled-in shell-holes. Broken carts and dead horses, with human bodies too if one looked, lie on all sides, but one is too weary to think of anything except how many more miles must be covered.

"A welcome halt at last with, perhaps, an hour or more delay. The men were already stretched by the side of the road, and I was not slow to follow their example. I often used to wonder how anyone could sleep lying in mud or water, but at that moment the place for sleep, as far as I was concerned, did not matter two straws, a thorn bush, the bed of a stream, anywhere would do to satisfy the longing for even a few moment's slumber after nearly two days and nights of marching without sleep. I picked out a soft spot on the ruins of a home, lay down with a sigh of relief, and then, for all I cared, all the King's guns and the Kaiser's combined might roar till they were hoarse, and all the rain in the heavens might fall, as it was falling then, I was too tired and happy to bother.

"I was chuckling over the disappearance of the officer in front of me into a friendly trench from which he emerged if possible, a little more muddy than he was, when I felt my two legs shoot from under me, and I vanished down the sides of a shell-hole which I had not noticed. As I am not making a confession of my whole life, I shall not tell you what I said, but it was something different from the exclamation of the pious old gentleman who used to mutter 'Tut, tut' every time he missed the golf ball.

"The Head Quarters Staff found shelter in an old mine-shaft, dark, foul-smelling, and dripping water which promised soon to flood us out. Still it was some protection from the down-pour outside, and I slept like a top for some hours in a dry corner sitting on a coil of wire."

1st August.

"Morning brought a leaden sky, more rain, and no breakfast! Our cook with the rations had got lost during the night, so there was nothing for it but to tighten one's belt and bless the man (backwards) who invented eating. But He who feeds the birds of the air did not forget us, and by midday we were sitting down before a steaming tin of tea, bully beef and biscuits, a banquet fit to set before an emperor after nearly twenty-four hours' fast. Not for a moment during the whole of the day did the merciless rain cease. The men, soaked to the skin and beyond it, were standing up to their knees in a river of mud and water, and like ourselves were unable to get any hot food till the afternoon. Our only consolation was that our trenches were not shelled and we had no casualties. Someone must have had compassion on our plight, for when night fell a new Brigade came in to relieve us, much to our surprise and joy. Back to the camp we had left the previous night, one of the hardest marches I ever put in, but cheered at the thought of a rest. Once again we got through Ypres without a shell, though they fell before and after our passing; good luck was on our side for once."

Here they remained for a couple of days, and it was during this interval that Fr. Doyle wrote the above little chronicle. He resumed it on the morning of Sunday, 12th August. "Dearest Father," he began, "when I finished writing the last line I could not help asking myself should I ever continue this little narrative of my adventures and experiences, for we were under marching orders to make our way that night to the Front Line, a series of shell holes in the ground, won from the enemy. To hold this we knew would be no easy task, but I little thought of what lay before me, of the thousand and one dangers I was to pass through unscathed, or of the hardship and suffering which were to be crowded into the next few days.

"It is Sunday morning, August 12th. We have just got back to camp after (for me at least) six days and seven continuous nights on the battle-field. There was no chance last night of a moment's rest, and you may imagine there was little sleep the previous nights either, sitting on a box with one's feet in 12 inches of water. For the past forty-eight hours we have lived, eaten and slept in a flooded dug-out, which you left at the peril of your life, so you may fancy what relief it was to change one's sodden muddy clothes.

"Tired as I am, I cannot rest till I try to give you some account of what has happened, for I know you must be on the lookout for news of your boy, and also because my heart is bursting to tell you of God's love and protection, never so manifest as during this week.

"He has shielded me from almost countless dangers with more than the tender care of an earthly mother—what I have to say sounds in parts almost like a fairy tale—and if He has tried my endurance, once at least almost to breaking point, it was only to fill me with joy at the thought that I 'was deemed worthy to suffer (a little) for Him.'

"I shall give you as simply as I can the principal events of these exciting days as I jotted them down in my note-book."

Before resuming the diary it is necessary to remark that after the death of Fr. Knapp (31st July), Fr. Browne was

appointed chaplain to the 2nd Irish Guards. Hence from 2nd August till his death Fr. Doyle had the four Battalions to look after, as no other priest had come to the 48th Brigade. A certain priest had indeed been appointed as Fr. Browne's successor by Fr. Rawlinson. But by some error the order was brought to a namesake, who, on arriving at Poperinghe and discovering the mistake, absolutely refused to have anything to do with the battle. This will explain why Fr. Doyle had such hard work and why he would not allow himself any rest or relief. On 15th August, the day before Fr. Doyle's death, Fr. Browne wrote to his brother (Rev. W. F. Browne, C. C.):

"Fr. Doyle is a marvel. You may talk of heroes and saints, they are hardly in it! I went back the other day to see the old Dubs. as I heard they were having, we'll say, a taste of the War.

"No one has been yet appointed to my place, and Fr. Doyle has done double work. So unpleasant were the conditions that the men had to be relieved frequently. Fr. Doyle had no one to relieve him and so he stuck to the mud and the shells, the gas and the terror. Day after day he stuck it out.

"I met the Adjutant of one of my two Battalions, who previously had only known Fr. Doyle by sight. His first greeting to me was:—'Little Fr. Doyle'—they *all* call him that, more in affection than anything else—'deserves the V. C. more than any man that ever wore it. We cannot get him away from the line while the men are there, he is with his own and he is with us. The men couldn't stick it half so well if he weren't there. If we give him an orderly, he sends the man back, he wears no tin hat, and he is always so cheery.' Another officer, also a Protestant, said: 'Fr. Doyle never rests. Night and day he is with us. He finds a dying or dead man, does all, comes back smiling, makes a little cross, and goes out to bury him, and then begins all over again.'

"I needn't say, that through all this, the conditions of ground, and air and discomfort, surpass anything that I ever dreamt of in the worst days of the Somme."

We can now give the last fragment of Fr. Doyle's diary.

5th August.

"All day I have been busy hearing the men's confessions, and giving batch after batch Holy Communion. A consolation, surely, to see them crowding to the Sacraments, but a sad one too, because I know for many of them it is the last Absolution they will ever receive, and the next time they meet our Blessed Lord will be when they see Him face to face in Heaven."

And here—he was writing a week later—Fr. Doyle interrupts his narrative by a spontaneous outburst of grief for the loss of those whom he loved as 'his own children.' "My poor brave boys!" he exclaims. "They are lying now out on the battle-field; some in a little grave dug and blessed by their chaplain, who loves them all as if they were his own children; others stiff and stark with staring eyes, hidden in a shell-hole where they had crept to die; while, perhaps, in some far-off thatched cabin an anxious mother sits listening for the well-known step and voice which will never gladden her ear again. Do you wonder in spite of the joy that fills my heart that many a time the tears gather in my eyes, as I think of those who are gone?"

"As the men stand lined up on Parade, I go from company to company giving a General Absolution which I know is a big comfort to them, and then I shoulder my pack and make for the train which this time is to carry us part of our journey. 'Top end for Blighty, boys, bottom end Berlin,' I tell them as they clamber in, for they like a cheery word. 'If you're for Jerryland, Father, we're with you too,' shouts one big giant, which is greeted with a roar of approval and Berlin wins the day hands down.

"Though we are in fighting kit, there is no small load to carry: a haversack containing little necessary things, and three days' rations which consist of tinned corn beef, hard biscuits, tea and sugar, with usually some solidified methylated spirit for boiling water when a fire cannot be lighted; two

full water-bottles; a couple of gas-helmets, the new one weighing nine pounds, but guaranteed to keep out the smell of the Old Boy himself; then a waterproof trench coat; and, in addition, my Mass kit strapped on my back, on the off chance that some days at least I may be able to offer the Holy Sacrifice on the spot where so many men have fallen. My orderly should carry this, but I prefer to leave him behind when we go into action, to which he does not object. On a roasting hot day, tramping along a dusty road or scrambling up and down shell-holes, the extra weight tells. But then I think of my friend the hermit, and the pack grows light and easy!

"As I marched through Ypres at the head of the column, an officer ran across the road and stopped me: 'Are you a Catholic priest?' he asked, 'I should like to go to Confession.' There and then, by the side of the road, while the men marched by, he made his peace with God, and went away, let us hope, as happy as I felt at that moment. It was a trivial incident, but it brought home vividly to me what a priest was and the wondrous power given him by God. All the time we were pushing on steadily toward our goal across the battle-field of the previous week. Five days' almost continuous rain had made the torn ground worse than any ploughed field, but none seemed to care as so far not a shot had fallen near.

"We were congratulating ourselves on our good luck, when suddenly the storm burst. Away along the front trenches we saw the S. O. S. signal shoot into the air, two red and two green rockets, telling the artillery behind of an attack and calling for support. There was little need to send any signal as the enemy's guns had opened fire with a crash, and in a moment pandemonium, in fact fifty of them, were set loose. I can but describe the din by asking you to start together fifty first class thunder storms, though even then the swish and scream, the deafening crash of the shells, would be wanting.

"On we hurried in the hope of reaching cover which was close at hand, when right before us, the enemy started to put down a heavy barrage, literally a curtain of shells, to prevent reinforcements coming up. There was no getting

KEMMEL HILL AND YPRES FROM THE FREZENBERG RIDGE

(Autumn, 1919)

through that alive and, to make matters worse, the barrage was creeping nearer and nearer, only fifty yards away, while shell fragments hummed uncomfortably close. Old shell-holes there were in abundance, but every one of them was brim full of water, and one would only float on top. Here was a fix! Yet somehow I felt that though the boat seemed in a bad way, the Master was watching even while He seemed to sleep, and help would surely come. In the darkness I stumbled across a huge shell-hole crater, recently made, with no water. Into it we rolled and lay on our faces, while the tempest howled around and angry shells hissed overhead and burst on every side. For a few moments I shivered with fear, for we were now right in the middle of the barrage and the danger was very great, but my courage came back when I remembered how easily He who had raised the tempest saved His Apostles from it, and I never doubted He would do the same for us. Not a man was touched, though one had his rifle smashed to bits.

"We reached Head Quarters, a strong block-house made of concrete and iron rails, a master-piece of German cleverness. From time to time all during the night the enemy gunners kept firing at our shelter, having the range to a nicety. Scores exploded within a few feet of it, shaking us till our bones rattled; a few went smash against the walls and roof, and one burst at the entrance nearly blowing us over, but doing no harm thanks to the scientific construction of the passage. I tried to get a few winks of sleep on a stool, there was no room to lie down with sixteen men in a small hut. And I came to the conclusion that so far we had not done badly and there was every promise of an exciting time."

6th August.

"The following morning, though the Colonel and other officers pressed me very much to remain with them on the ground that I would be more comfortable, I felt I could do better work at the advanced dressing-station, or rather aid-post, and went and joined the doctor. It was a providential

step and saved me from being the victim of an extraordinary accident. The following night a shell again burst at the entrance to the block-house, as it had done our first night there; but this time exploded several boxes of Vérey lights or rockets which had been left at the door. A mass of flame and dense smoke rushed into the dug-out, severely burning some and almost suffocating all the officers and men, fifteen in number, with poisonous fumes, before they made their escape. Had I been there I should have shared the same fate, so you can imagine what I felt as I saw all my friends carried off to the hospital, possibly to suffer ill effects for life, while I by the merest chance was left behind well and strong to carry on God's work. I am afraid you will think me ungrateful, but more than once I almost regretted my escape, so great had been the strain of these past days now happily over.

"For once getting out of bed (save the mark) was an easy, in fact delightful task, for I was stiff and sore from my night's rest. My first task was to look around and see what were the possibilities for Mass. As all the dug-outs were occupied if not destroyed or flooded, I was delighted to discover a tiny ammunition store which I speedily converted into a chapel, building an altar with the boxes. The fact that it barely held myself did not signify as I had no server and had to be both priest and acolyte, and in a way I was not sorry I could not stand up, as I was able for once to offer the Holy Sacrifice on my knees.

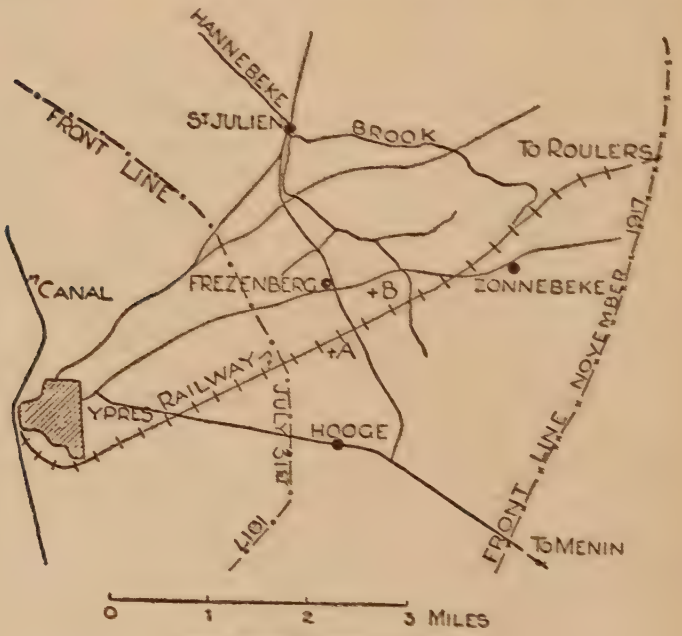
"It is strange that out here a desire I have long cherished should be gratified, viz.: to be able to celebrate alone, taking as much time as I wished without inconveniencing anyone. I read long ago in the Acts of the Martyrs of a captive priest, chained to the floor of the Coliseum, offering up the Mass on the altar of his own bare breast,[41] but, apart from that, Mass that morning must have been a strange one in the eyes of God's angels, and I trust not unacceptable to Him. Return-

[41] This story is told of S. Lucian, martyred at Nicomedia A.D. 250–251. Fr. Doyle probably read it in Dalgairns, *Holy Communion*, part 3, ch. 1; Dublin 1892[5], p. 200. But the story does not occur in the authentic portions of the martyr's acts.—Leclercq, *Les martyrs* 2 (1903) 98.

ing to the dressing-station, I refreshed the inner man in preparation for a hard day's work. You may be curious to know what an aid-post is like. Get out of your mind all ideas of a clean hospital ward, for our first aid dressing-station is any place, as near as possible to the fighting line, which will afford a little shelter—a cellar, a coal-hole, sometimes even a shell-hole. Here the wounded who have been roughly bandaged on the field are brought by the stretcher-bearers to be dressed by the doctor. Our aid-post was a rough tin shed built beside a concrete dug-out which we christened the Pig Sty. You could just crawl in on hands and knees to the solitary chamber which served as a dressing-room, recreation hall, sleeping apartment and anything else you cared to use it for. One could not very well sit up, much less stand, in our château, but you could stretch your legs and get a snooze if the German shells and the wounded men let you. On the floor were some wood-shavings, kept well moistened in damp weather by a steady drip from the ceiling, and which gave covert to a host of curious little creatures, all most friendly and affectionate. There was room for three but as a rule we slept six or seven officers side by side. I had the post of honour next the wall, which had the double advantage of keeping me cool and damp, and of offering a stout resistance if anyone wanted to pinch more space, not an easy task, you may well conclude.

"I spent a good part of the day, when not occupied with the wounded, wandering round the battle-field with a spade to bury stray dead. Though there was not very much infantry fighting owing to the state of the ground, not for a moment during the week did the artillery duel cease, reaching at times a pitch of unimaginable intensity. I have been through some hot stuff at Loos, and the Somme was warm enough for most of us, but neither of them could compare to the fierceness of the German fire here. For example, we once counted fifty shells, big chaps too, whizzing over our little nest in sixty seconds, not counting those that burst close by. In fact you became so accustomed to it all that you ceased to bother about them, unless some battery started 'strafing' your particular position when you began to feel a

keen personal interest in every new-comer. I have walked about for hours at a time getting through my work, with 'crumps' of all sizes bursting in dozens on every side. More than once my heart has nearly jumped out of my mouth from sudden terror, but not once during all these days have I had what I could call a narrow escape, but always a strange, confident feeling of trust and security in the all powerful protection of our Blessed Lord. You will see before the end that my trust was not misplaced. All the same I am not foolhardy nor do I expose myself to danger unnecessarily, the coward is too strong in me for that; but when duty calls I know I can count on the help of One who has never failed me yet."



THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES.

7th August.

"No Mass this morning, thanks, I suppose, to the kindly attention of the evil one. I reached my chapel of the previous

morning, only to find that a big 9.5 inch shell had landed on the top of it during the day; went away, feeling very grateful I had not been inside at the time, but had to abandon all thought of Mass, as no shelter could be found from the heavy rain.

"The Battalion went out to-day for three days' rest, but I remained behind. Fr. Browne has gone back to the Irish Guards. He is a tremendous loss, not only to myself personally, but to the whole Brigade where he did magnificent work and made a host of friends. And so I was left alone. Another chaplain was appointed, but for reasons best known to himself he did not take over his battalion and let them go into the fight alone. There was nothing for it but to remain on and do his work, and glad I was I did so, for many a man went down that night, the majority of whom I was able to anoint.

"Word reached me about midnight that a party of men had been caught by shell fire nearly a mile away. I dashed off in the darkness, this time hugging my helmet as the enemy was firing gas shells. A moment's pause to absolve a couple of dying men, and then I reached the group of smashed and bleeding bodies, most of them still breathing. The first thing I saw almost unnerved me; a young soldier lying on his back, his hands and face a mass of blue phosphorus-flame, smoking horribly in the darkness. He was the first victim I had seen of the new gas the Germans are using, a fresh horror in this awful war. The poor lad recognized me, I anointed him on a little spot of unburnt flesh, not a little nervously, as the place was reeking with gas, gave him a drink which he begged for so earnestly, and then hastened to the others.

"Back again to the aid-post for stretchers and help to carry in the wounded, while all the time the shells are coming down like hail. Good God! how can any human thing live in this? As I hurry back I hear that two men have been hit twenty yards away. I am with them in a moment, splashing through mud and water. A quick absolution and the last rites of the Church. A flash from a gun shows me that the poor boy in my arms is my own servant, or rather, one who took the place

of my orderly while he was away, a wonderfully good and pious lad.

"By the time we reached the first party, all were dead, most of them with charred hands and faces. One man with a pulverized leg was still living. I saw him off to hospital, made as comfortable as could be but I could not help thinking of his torture as the stretcher jolted over the rough ground and up and down the shell holes.

"Little rest that night, for the Germans simply pelted us with gas shells of every description, which, however, thanks to our new helmets, did no harm. Fritz is an expert in gas torture. He has long treated us to weeping shells, and many an unrepentant tear have I shed. Now he has some stuff which tickles your throat and nose like red pepper, making you sneeze like a soda-water bottle; a gas which burns your hands and face, a beast of a thing which gives you all the delights of a rough sea voyage; hence, you can have quite a lively time if you wish to." [42]

8th August.

"There is little to record during the next couple of days except the discovery of a new cathedral and the happiness of daily Mass. This time I was not quite so well off, as I could not kneel upright and my feet were in the water which helped to keep the fires of devotion from growing too warm. Having carefully removed an ancient German leg, I managed to vest by sitting on the ground, a new rubric I had to introduce also at the Communion, as otherwise I could not have emptied the Chalice. I feel that when I get home again I shall be absolutely miserable because everything will be so

[42] "At this time the enemy was developing his use of a new poison-gas—mustard gas—which raised blisters and burned men's bodies where the vapour was condensed into a reddish powder, and blinded them for a week or more, if not for ever, and turned their lungs to water."—Sir Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*, 1920, p. 385. "Mustard gas" disables temporarily without kil'ing; the proportion of fatal cases was only one in 40, and of permanently disabled one in 200; where as in shell casualties the proportion of fatal cases is one in three. Cf. Dr. J. B. Haldane, *Callinicus: A Defence of Chemical Warfare*, 1925, pp. 27, 33.

clean and dry and comfortable. Perhaps some kind friend will pour a bucket or two of water over my bed occasionally to keep me in good spirits.

"When night fell, I made my way up to a part of the Line which could not be approached in daylight, to bury an officer and some men. A couple of grimy, unwashed figures emerged from the bowels of the earth to help me, but first knelt down and asked for Absolution. They then leisurely set to work to fill in the grave. 'Hurry up, boys,' I said, 'I don't want to have to bury you as well,' for the spot was a hot one. They both stopped working much to my disgust, for I was just longing to get away. 'Be gobs, Father,' replied one, 'I haven't the divil a bit of fear in me now after the holy Absolution.' 'Nor I,' chimed in the other, 'I am as happy as a king.' The poor Padre, who had been keeping his eye on a row of 'crumps,' which were coming unpleasantly near, felt anything but happy; however there was nothing for it but to stick it out as the men were in a pious mood; and he escaped at last, grateful that he was not asked to say the rosary."

10th August.

"A sad morning as casualties were heavy and many men came in dreadfully wounded. One man was the bravest I ever met. He was in dreadful agony, for both legs had been blown off at the knee. But never a complaint fell from his lips, even while they dressed his wounds, and he tried to make light of his injuries. 'Thank God, Father,' he said, 'I am able to stick it out to the end. Is it not all for little Belgium?' The Extreme Unction, as I have noticed time and again, eased his bodily pain. 'I am much better now and easier, God bless you,' he said, as I left him to attend a dying man. He opened his eyes as I knelt beside him: 'Ah; Father Doyle, Father Doyle,' he whispered faintly, and then motioned me to bend lower as if he had some message to give. As I did so, he put his two arms round my neck and kissed me. It was all the poor fellow could do to show his gratitude that he had not been

left to die alone and that he would have the consolation of receiving the Last Sacraments before he went to God. Sitting a little way off I saw a hideous bleeding object, a man with his face smashed by a shell, with one if not both eyes torn out. He raised his head as I spoke. 'Is that the priest? Thank God, I am all right now.' I took his blood-covered hands in mine as I searched his face for some whole spot on which to anoint him. I think I know better now why Pilate said 'Behold the Man' when he showed our Lord to the people.

"In the afternoon, while going my rounds, I was forced to take shelter in the dug-out of a young officer belonging to another regiment. For nearly two hours I was a prisoner and found out he was a Catholic from Dublin, and had been married just a month. Was this a chance visit, or did God send me there to prepare him for death, for I had not long left the spot when a shell burst and killed him? I carried his body out the next day and buried him in a shell-hole, and once again I blessed that protecting Hand which had shielded me from his fate.

"That night we moved Head Quarters and aid-post to a more advanced position, a strong concrete emplacement, but a splendid target for the German gunners. For the forty-eight hours we were there they hammered us almost constantly day and night till I thought our last hour had come. There we lived with a foot, sometimes more, of water on the floor, pretty well soaked through, for it was raining hard at times. Sleep was almost impossible—fifty shells a minute made some noise—and to venture out without necessity was foolishness. We were well provided with tinned food, and a spirit lamp for making hot tea, so that we were not too badly off, and rather enjoyed hearing the German shells hopping off the roof or bursting on the walls of their own strong fort."

11th August.

"Close beside us I had found the remains of a dug-out which had been blown in the previous day and three men killed. I made up my mind to offer up Mass there for the repose of

their souls. In any case 'I did not know a better 'ole to go to,' and to this little act of charity I attribute the saving of my life later on in the day. I had barely fitted up my altar when a couple of shells burst overhead, sending the clay tumbling down. For a moment I felt very tempted not to continue as the place was far from safe. But later I was glad I went on, for the Holy Souls certainly came to my aid as I did to theirs.

"I had finished breakfast and had ventured a bit down the trench to find a spot to bury some bodies left lying there. I had reached a sheltered corner, when I heard the scream of a shell coming towards me rapidly, and judging by the sound, straight for the spot where I stood. Instinctively I crouched down, and well I did so, for the shell whizzed past my head—I felt my hair blown about by the hot air—and burst in front of me with a deafening crash. It seemed to me as if a heavy wooden hammer had hit me on the top of the head, and I reeled like a drunken man, my ears ringing with the explosion. For a moment I stood wondering how many pieces of shrapnel had hit me, or how many legs and arms I had left, and then dashed through the thick black smoke to save myself from being buried alive by the shower of falling clay which was rapidly covering me. I hardly know how I reached the dug-out, for I was speechless and so badly shaken that it was only by a tremendous effort I was able to prevent myself from collapsing utterly as I had seen so many do from shell shock. Then a strange thing happened: something seemed to whisper in my ear, one of those sudden thoughts which flash through the mind: 'Did not that shell come from the hand of God? He willed it should be so. Is it not a proof that He can protect you no matter what the danger?'

"The thought that it was all God's doing acted like a tonic; my nerves calmed down, and shortly after I was out again to see could I meet another iron friend. As a matter of fact I wanted to see exactly what had happened, for the report of a high explosive shell is so terrific that one is apt to exaggerate distances. An officer recently assured me he

was only one foot from a bursting shell, when in reality he was a good 40 yards away. You may perhaps find it hard to believe, as I do myself, what I saw. I had been standing by a trellis work of thin sticks. By stretching out my hand I could touch the screen, and the *shell fell smashing the woodwork!* My escape last year at Loos was wonderful, but then I was some yards away, and partly protected by a bend in the trench. Here the shell fell, I might say, at my very feet; there was no bank, no protection except the wall of your good prayers and the protecting arm of God.

"That night we were relieved, or rather it was early morning, 4.30 a. m., when the last company marched out. I went with them so that I might leave no casualties behind. We hurried over the open as fast as we could, floundering in the thick mud, tripping over wire in the darkness, and, I hope, some of the lay members cursing the German gunners for disturbing us by an odd shot. We had nearly reached the road, not knowing it was a marked spot, when like a hurricane a shower of shells came smashing down upon us. We were fairly caught and, for once I almost lost hope of getting through in safety. For five minutes or more we pushed on in desperation; we could not stop to take shelter, for dawn was breaking and we should have been seen by the enemy. Right and left in front and behind, some far away, many very close, the shells kept falling. Crash! One has pitched in the middle of the line, wounding five men, none of them seriously. Surely God is good to us, for it seems impossible a single man will escape unhurt, and then when the end seemed at hand, our batteries opened fire with a roar to support an attack that was beginning. The German guns ceased like magic, or turned their attention elsewhere, and we scrambled on to the road and reached home without further loss."

(8.) THE END.

This was the end of Fr. Doyle's diary. There followed just this last message to his father, so pathetic in the light of his death, two days later: "I have told you all my escapes, dear-

I have told you all my escapes, dearest Father because I think what I have written will give you the same confidence which I feel that my old arm-chair up in Heaven is not ready yet, and I do not want you to be uneasy about me. I am all the better for these couple of days' rest and am quite on my fighting legs again. Leave will be possible very shortly, I think, so I shall only say au revoir in view of an early meeting.

Heaps of love to every dear one

As ever, dearest Father,

Your loving son

Willie. 14/8/'17.

FACSIMILE OF FATHER DOYLE'S LAST WRITTEN WORDS

est Father, because I think what I have written will give you the same confidence which I feel, that my old arm-chair up in Heaven is not ready yet, and I do not want you to be uneasy about me. I am all the better for these couple of days' rest, and am quite on my fighting legs again. Leave will be possible very shortly, I think, so I shall only say au revoir in view of an early meeting. Heaps of love to every dear one. As ever, dearest Father, your loving son, Willie. 14/8/17." Before this letter had reached home, the great Leave Day had come for Willie Doyle. He was called Home. "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. From henceforth now, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours, for their works follow them." (*Apoc.* 14. 13.)

The recital, which has just been given, of Fr. Doyle's superhuman exertions and hairbreadth escapes, has made it abundantly clear that only by some continuous miracle could he hope to survive another such advance. It came next day, the 15th, when once more the Irish troops were moved up through and beyond Ypres. Here on the dawn of Thursday, 16th August, the front line from St. Julien to the Roulers railway south of Frezenberg was held by Irishmen waiting for the order to advance. Every insignificant rise in the undulating Flemish farmlands in front of them was crowned by a German post; there were several strong "pill-boxes" (concrete blockhouses) and in the middle of the line of attack a spur (Hill 35) dominated every approach. It was these redoubts—especially Borry Farm Redoubt with its sixty expert gunners and five machine guns—which frustrated all attempts of the Irish infantry. Moreover, no supporting waves came up, for no living beings could get through the transverse fire of the German machine-guns. And so when the German counter attack was launched in the afternoon, the Rifles, the Dublins, and the Inniskillings had to retire, taking with them what wounded they could. Many groups were surrounded and cut off or had to fight their way back in the night.

This is how an impartial English writer describes the treatment and bravery of the Irish Divisions on that fatal day: [43]

[43] Sir Philip Gibbs, *Realities of War*, 1920, pp. 388 f.

"The story of the two Irish Divisions—the 36th (Ulster) and 16th (Nationalist)—in their fighting on August 16th, is black in tragedy. They were left in the line for sixteen days before the battle, and were shelled and gassed incessantly as they crouched in wet ditches. Every day groups of men were blown to bits, until the ditches were bloody, and the living lay by the corpses of their comrades. Every day scores of wounded crawled back through the bogs, if they had the strength to crawl. Before the attack on August 16th the Ulster Division had lost nearly 2,000 men. Then they attacked and lost 2,000 more and over 100 officers. The 16th Division lost as many men before the attack and more officers. The 8th Dublins had been annihilated in holding the line. On the night before the battle hundreds of men were gassed. Then their comrades attacked and lost over 2,000 more and 162 officers. All the ground below two knolls of earth called Hill 35 and Hill 37, which were defended by German 'pill-boxes,' called Pond Farm and Gallipoli, Beck House and Borry Farm, became an Irish shambles. In spite of their dreadful losses the survivors in the Irish battalions went forward to the assault with desperate valour on the morning of August 16th, surrounded the 'pill-boxes,' stormed them through blasts of machine-gun fire, and toward the end of the day small bodies of these men had gained a footing on the objectives which they had been asked to capture, but were then too weak to resist German counter attacks. The 7th and 8th Royal Irish Fusiliers had been almost exterminated in their efforts to dislodge the enemy from Hill 37. They lost 17 officers out of 21, and 64 per cent. of their men. One company of 4 officers and 100 men ordered to capture the concrete fort known as Borry Farm, at all cost, lost 4 officers and 70 men. The 9th Dublins lost 15 officers out of 17, and 66 per cent. of their men.

"The two Irish Divisions were broken to bits, and their Brigadiers called it murder. They were violent in their denunciation of the 5th Army for having put their men into the attack after those thirteen days of heavy shelling, and, after the battle, they complained that they were cast aside like old shoes, no care being taken for the comfort of the men who had

survived. No motor lorries were sent to meet them and to bring them down, but they had to tramp back, exhausted and dazed. The remnants of the 16th Division, the poor despairing remnants, were sent, without rest or baths, straight into the line again, down south."

Fr. Doyle was speeding all day hither and thither over the battle-field like an angel of mercy; his words of Absolution were the last words heard on earth by many an Irish lad that day, and the stooping figure of priest and father, seen through blinding blood, filled the glance of many in their agony. Perhaps once more some speechless youth ebbing out his life's blood kissed his beloved padre, or by a silent handshake bade farewell to the father of his soul. "Ah, Father Doyle, Father Doyle." "Is that the priest? Thank God, I am all right now." "Ah! Father, is that you? Thanks be to God for His goodness in sending you; my heart was sore to die without the priest." . . . All the little stories come back to us as we try to reconstruct that last great day of priestly ministry and sacrifice. We shall never know here below, for towards the evening of that heroic day, Fr. Doyle died a martyr of charity.[44] The great dream which had haunted him for a lifetime had come true; he shed his blood while working for Christ. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (*S. John* 15. 13.) "The good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." (*S. John* 10. 11.)

Few authentic details can be gathered concerning that day of carnage and confusion, especially as the troops were retiring from ground which was not finally occupied until about six weeks later after severe fighting. The various reports concerning the circumstances of Fr. Doyle's death agree on the following points which may be accepted as certain. When the fighting became desperate and retirement seemed inevitable, all

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[44] Here is an extract from a letter written by a fellow-chaplain (Fr. J. Flinn, S.J.) shortly after the death of Fr. Doyle: "In the train 'somewhere' here in France I met an officer of W. Doyle's regiment. . . . For one half-hour in the crowded carriage he spoke the praises of poor Billy. 'That man was,' he said, 'the *limit*.' He wound up with a word that was new, to me at least—'He'd have died a martyr anyway, for he had made up his mind to go, after the war, to one of the leper settlements.'"

non-combatants, including the doctor and chaplain, were ordered to the rear. After a few hours Fr. Doyle returned to the fighting zone, at least to the Regimental Aid Post [45]—which was merely a shell-hole, as all kinds of shelters were marked down by the German gunners. "I know," writes Lieut.-Col. H. R. Stirke, "that he had been sent back by the O.C. of one of the regiments, together with some other non-combatants, as the fighting was very severe and it was not necessary to risk more lives. He only remained behind a few hours and then returned to the firing line, like the brave man he was." Fr. Doyle, learning that a wounded officer or soldier was lying out in an exposed position, went out to minister to him.[46] The bombardment and barrage increasing in violence, Fr. Doyle started to retire. He had just come up with some—probably three—officers when a shell fell among them, killing them instantaneously.[47]

It has also been asserted, or rather rumoured, that some retiring Dublins, coming across the body of Fr. Doyle, gave it a hasty burial. Without going into gruesome details, it is enough to say that such a heroic act, amid the inferno and panic then prevailing, requires to be better substantiated. No trace of such a grave has been found. It seems more likely, therefore, that the remains of him who often risked his life to bury friend and foe, lie, commingled with those of countless unnamed companions, beneath the plain of Ypres. Is not such a fate the consummation of his martyrdom? "Entice the wild beasts to become my tomb and to leave no trace of my body," writes Ignatius of Antioch to the Romans (iv. 2), "so that in falling asleep, I may be a burden to no one. Then shall I be really a disciple of Jesus Christ, when the world will

[45] As the doctor was at the rear, Corporal Raitt was in charge.

[46] Private McInespie, who was acting as his "runner," says that he went with Fr. Doyle and also that Fr. Doyle started to drag the wounded man in.

[47] According to the account given by Col. Stirke, Capt. Healy, Lieut. Kiernan and Fr. Browne, the officers were taking refuge in a German pill-box (whose entrance, of course, faced the enemy) and Fr. Doyle was just entering when the shell struck him. Private McInespie claims to have been an eye-witness, standing quite near, and says that Fr. Doyle and the officers were in the open. Corporal Raitt confirms that McInespie came staggering in to the R.A.P. and when able to speak said "Fr. Doyle has been killed." Both these witnesses think that his death occurred on 17th August.

not even see my body." "I beg of God whom I love," writes our own S. Patrick in his Confession (59), "to grant me that I may shed my blood with those strangers and captives for His name's sake, even though I be without burial itself, or my corpse be most miserably divided, limb by limb, amongst dogs and fierce beasts, or the birds of the air devour it. I think it most certain that if this happen to me, I shall have gained my soul with my body." For Christ's sake Fr. Doyle shed his blood among strangers; his body was torn and devoured by those fierce beasts and birds of the air which man has diabolically invented for mutual slaughter.

Though we cannot raise a monument to honour his mortal remains, we have in this book built a memorial to enshrine his life. Not worthy of him, indeed, for it has been built by amateur hands; but the stones thereof were mostly quarried by himself when still in our midst. And now, before our task is done, it will not be inappropriate to find a place for some military tributes to the soldier son of a soldier saint.

"All through the worst hours an Irish padre went about among the dead and dying, giving Absolution to his boys. Once he came back to head quarters, but he would not take a bite of food or stay, though his friends urged him. He went back to the field to minister to those who were glad to see him bending over them in their last agony. Four men were killed by shell fire as he knelt beside them, and he was not touched—not touched until his own turn came. A shell burst close by, and the padre fell dead."

(Sir Philip Gibbs in the *Daily Chronicle* and the *Daily Telegraph*, also in his book *From Bapaume to Passchendaele*, 1917, p. 254.)

"The Orangemen will not forget a certain Roman Catholic chaplain who lies in a soldier's grave in that sinister plain beyond Ypres. He went forward and back over the battle-field with bullets whining about him, seeking out the dying and kneeling in the mud beside them to give them Absolution, walking with death with a smile on his face, watched by his men with reverence and a kind of awe until a shell burst near him

(A)—Railway Line near Frezenberg; Hannebeke brook in background.
(Photo taken from the position marked A on the Map on p. 540.

(B)—Remains of Concrete Blockhouse near Frezenberg—possibly the scene of Father Doyle's death. The shed on the right is a subsequent structure.
(Photo taken at the position marked B on the Map on p. 540.)

and he was killed. His familiar figure was seen and welcomed by hundreds of Irishmen who lay in that bloody place. Each time he came back across the field he was begged to remain in comparative safety. Smilingly he shook his head and went again into the storm. He had been with his boys at Ginchy and through other times of stress, and he would not desert them in their agony.[48] They remember him as a saint—they speak his name with tears."

(Percival Phillips in the *Daily Express* and also the *Morning Post*, 22nd August, 1917.)

"Many tales of individual gallantry are told; two instances especially which should be recorded; one being that of an officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps, attached to the Leinsters, who spent five hours in circumstances of the greatest danger tending the wounded, and behaving in all ways with consummate heroism; and the other that of a Roman Catholic chaplain who went up with the men, sustained and cheered them to the last, till he was killed."

(The *Times*, 22nd August, 1917.)

The following passage is from a letter of General Hickie written to a friend on 18th Nov., 1917.

"Fr. Doyle was one of the best priests I have ever met, and one of the bravest men who have fought or worked out here. He did his duty, and more than his duty, most nobly, and has left a memory and a name behind him that will never be forgotten. On the day of his death, 16th August, he had worked in the front line, and even in front of that line, and appeared to know no fatigue—he never knew fear. He was killed by a shell towards the close of the day, and was buried on the Frezenberg Ridge. . . . He was recommended for the Victoria Cross by his Commanding Officer, by his Brigadier, and by myself. Superior Authority, however, has not granted it, and

[48] Compare what Dom. Bede Camm says of Fr. B. Kavanagh, C.S.S.R.: "He was warned not to go where he did, for the danger was too great, but he said, 'If my boys can go there, so can I.'"—*Dublin Review*, vol. 165, 1919, p. 62.

as no other posthumous reward is given, his name will, I believe, be mentioned in the Commander-in-Chief's Despatch. . . . I can say without boasting that this is a Division of brave men; and even among these, Fr. Doyle stood out."

Though Fr. Doyle cared nothing for human decorations—it was another Commander-in-Chief under Whom he served—it seems right to chronicle this judgement of others and to record the fact that he was recommended for the D.S.O. at Wytschaete and the V.C. at Frezenberg. However the triple disqualification of being an Irishman, a Catholic and a Jesuit, proved insuperable.[49]

On 15th December, 1917, General Hickie, having discovered Mr. Doyle's address, paid another tribute: "I could not say too much about your son," he wrote. "He was loved and reverenced by us all; his gallantry, self-sacrifice, and devotion to duty were all so well known and recognized. I think that his was the most wonderful character that I have ever known."

"Strong Point 13 and the little dug-out of the brave padre rise before me as I write," says an Irish officer in the *Catholic News* (15th September, 1917). "I recall the early Mass when our battalion was in reserve. Often have I knelt at the impromptu altar serving that Mass for the padre in the upper barn; hail, rain, and snow blowing in gusts through the shell-torn roof. He knew no fear. As company officers, how many times have we accompanied him through the front line system to speak a word to the men. Well do we remember when at

[49] A soldier, knowing what Father Knapp and Father Gwynn had done, once asked his chaplain: "Aren't our priests, Father, forbidden to take the V.C.?" Even before the Frezenberg action Fr. Doyle was reputed by the officers to have earned the V.C. Thus Lieut. Galvin, writing home on 14th August, 1917, says: "If ever a man earned the V.C. in this war, it is Father Doyle. He is simply splendid. He comes up every night under heavy shell-fire, burying the dead and binding the wounded and cheering the men. I wish to heavens we had a few doctors like him." "I cannot refrain here from expressing my opinon that, among the many glaring inconsistencies that disfigured the award of honours, none was more remarkable than the refusal of the V.C. to this chaplain, who merited it as truly as any one of those—all honour to them—who received it; and not once alone, but twenty times. One hardly knows what to think."—R. H. J. Stewart, S.J., in *Month* 138 (1921) 304.

long last we went back for rest and training, how our beloved padre did the long three days' march at the head of the battalion.

"Which of the men do not recall with a tear and a smile how he went 'over the top' at Wytschaete? He lived with us in our newly-won position, and endured our hardships with unfailing cheerfulness. In billets he was an ever welcome visitor to the companies, and our only trouble was that he could not always live with whatever company he might be visiting.

"Ypres sounded the knell. Recommended for the D.S.O. for Wytschaete, he did wonderful work at Ypres, and was recommended for the V.C. Many a dying soldier on that bloody field has flashed a last look of loving recognition as our brave padre rushed to his aid, braving the fearful barrage and whistling machine-gun bullets, to give his boy a last few words of hope."

"He was one of the finest fellows I ever met," wrote Lieut.-Col. H. R. Stirke (commanding the 8th Dublins) on 13th September, 1917, "utterly fearless, always with a cheery word on his lips, and ever ready to go out and attend the wounded and dying under the heaviest fire. He was genuinely loved by everyone, and thoroughly deserved the unstinted praise he got from all ranks for his rare pluck and devotion to duty."

"If I had gone through the thousandth part of what Fr. Doyle did," said Captain Healy (8th Dublins), "or if I had run a hundredth part of the risks he ran, I would have been dead long ago. Wherever there was danger, there was Fr. Doyle; and wherever Fr. Doyle was, there was danger. Whenever I saw him coming towards me, I told him to go away as I knew the enemy would shell the place at once! When shells were raining on us, he used to wander about from dug-out to dug-out as if he were taking a walk for the good of his health. If a man was hit, you would think he knew it by instinct; he was with the wounded man before anyone else was. It didn't matter where the man was lying, out he went to him."

In its own way the following generous appreciation by a Belfast Orangeman is rather unique. It was published in the *Glasgow Weekly News* of 1st September, 1917:

"Fr. Doyle was a good deal among us. We couldn't possibly agree with his religious opinions, but we simply worshipped him for other things. He didn't know the meaning of fear, and he didn't know what bigotry was. He was as ready to risk his life to take a drop of water to a wounded Ulsterman as to assist men of his own faith and regiment. If he risked his life in looking after Ulster Protestant soldiers once, he did it a hundred times in the last few days. . . . The Ulstermen felt his loss more keenly than anybody, and none were readier to show their marks of respect to the dead hero priest than were our Ulster Presbyterians. Fr. Doyle was a true Christian in every sense of the word, and a credit to any religious faith. He never tried to get things easy. He was always sharing the risks of the men, and had to be kept in restraint by the staff for his own protection. Many a time have I seen him walk beside a stretcher trying to console a wounded man, with bullets flying around him and shells bursting every few yards."

"He never tried to get things easy"—words conveying a truth deeper than this Ulster soldier could realise! May we not reverently recall S. Paul's sentence: "Having joy set before Him, He endured the cross"? (*Hebr.* 12. 2.)

A similar tribute was paid by Sergeant T. Flynn, Dublin Fusiliers, in a letter written to his mother on 18th August, and published in the *Irish News,* 29th August, 1917:

"We had the misfortune to lose our chaplain, Fr. Doyle, the other day. He was a real saint and would never leave his men, and it was really marvellous to see him burying dead soldiers under terrible shell fire. He did not know what fear was, and everybody in the battalion, Catholic and Protestant alike, idolised him. I went to Confession to him and received Holy Communion from him a day or two before he was killed, and I feel terribly sorry after him.

"He loved the men and spent every hour of his time looking

after them, and, when we were having a fairly hot time in the trenches, he would bring us up boxes of cigarettes and cheer us up. The men would do anything he asked them, and I am sure we will never get another padre like him. Everybody says that he has earned the V.C. many times over, and I can vouch for it myself from what I have seen him do many a time. He was asked not to go into action with the battalion, but he would not stop behind, and I am confident that no braver or holier man ever fell in battle than he."

An even more convincing testimony was borne by a Fusilier who happened to be home in Dublin, on leave, at the time of Fr. Doyle's death. Meeting a friend who told him the news, he kept repeating incredulously: "He's not dead. He couldn't be killed!" When at last he was shown a paper describing the padre's death, the poor fellow knelt down on the pavement and began to pray. Then to the crowd which gathered round him he recounted how, when he was lying wounded in an exposed position and expecting every moment to be killed by a shell, Fr. Doyle had crept out to him and carried him to a place of safety.[50] A similarly spontaneous tribute was paid to Fr. Doyle's memory by a burglar, presumably an ex-soldier, who broke into Mr. Doyle's house in Dalkey at midnight in January, 1922. He made the poor old man get up and unlock all the drawers. In ransacking a drawer he came across a mortuary card of Fr. Doyle. "Who's that?" he asked excitedly. "That's my son, Fr. Willie Doyle, who gave his life for the soldiers in Flanders," answered Mr. Doyle. "That was a holy priest," replied the robber, "he saved many souls." Whereupon he took the card, kissed it, put it into his pocket, and cleared!

The good sisters of St. Anthony's Institute, Locre, who had always been so kind to Fr. Doyle, were anxious to have his

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[50] After Fr. Doyle's death some of the men of the 8th Dublins expressed their appreciation in verses whose untutored genuineness will excuse all literary shortcomings. The first stanza runs thus:

> He is gone from amongst us, may his soul rest above,
> The pride of our regiment whom every man loved,
> His life's work is o'er, he has finished his toil,
> So may God rest the soul of our brave Father Doyle.

remains, not realising the circumstances of his death. The Superioress wrote to Fr. Browne a touching little note, in rather broken English, on 21st August:

"What very sad news I have received! Our good, brave, holy Fr. Doyle has to be killed! Compassionate Lord Jesus give him eternal rest! Rev. Fr. Browne will accept my condolence, my feelings of sympathy in the great loss of our good Fr. Doyle, your confrère. Notre petit saint, he has now received his recompense for his holy life, his great love for God and neighbour. Oh! he was so much loved by everybody and never will we forget him. We are all very glad to have had him with us in the convent and to have make his life as comfortable as possible. Were it not possible, Rev. Fr., to bring his holy body to the convent? It were a great honour to us to have it.—Yours most sincerely, Mother."

Fr. Browne himself, who had been with Fr. Doyle in Clongowes and Belvedere, who had, above all, been so intimately associated with him in their joint mission to the 48th Brigade, expressed his grief and his esteem in a letter, written on 20th August, from which a passage may be quoted:

"All during these last months he was my greatest help, and to his saintly advice, and still more to his saintly example, I owe everything I felt and did. With him, as with others of us, his bravery was no mere physical show-off. He was afraid and felt fear deeply, how deeply few can realise. And yet the last word said of him to me by the Adjutant of the Royal Irish Rifles, in answer to my question, 'I hope you are taking care of Fr. Doyle?' was, 'He is as fond of the shells as ever.' His one idea was to do God's work with the men, to make them saints. How he worked and how he prayed for this! Fine weather and foul he was always thinking of them and what he could do for them. In the cold winter he would not use the stove I bought for our dug-out. He scoffed at the idea as making it 'stuffy'—and that when the thermometer was fifteen to twenty degrees below zero, the coldest ever known to living memory here. And how he loathed it all, the life and everything it implied! And yet nobody suspected it. God's Will was his law. And to all who remonstrated, 'Must I not be

ZONNEBEKE FROM FREZENBERG
(Autumn, 1919)

about the Lord's business?' was his laughing answer in act and deed and not merely in word. May he rest in peace—it seems superfluous to pray for him."

There, once more, we have Fr. Doyle's unmistakable portrait, those characteristic traits familiar now to us who in these pages, have read his inner life: the jest-concealed cross, the unsuspected loathing, the fear so pleasantly disguised, the selfless work and incessant prayer, the loving trustfulness in God's Will. And as we come to the close of this life-story, all its incidents are gathered up in memory to blend into a final cadence: the novice's blood-sealed covenant, the consuming love and zeal, the hidden reparation, the vigils and scourgings, the pond at Rathfarnham, the nettles at Delgany, the mud and blood of West Flanders and the Somme. Nothing befitted such a life like the leaving of it.

"Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" he would have gently asked us, had we, prudent ones, expostulated with him that day for being foolhardy. His Father's business: not bloodshed and hate and strife, but mercy and brotherhood and reconciliation. He might of course, have stayed behind in Ypres or St. Jean; he could, had he wished, have kept out of danger. Perchance there were some who said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." They were right. "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, and whoever for My sake, loses his life, will save it. What does it avail a man if, after gaining the whole world, he has lost or forfeited himself?" "For My sake"—"I tell you, as often as you did it for one of these My brothers, however lowly, you did it for Me." Beyond and besides the great legion of faithful ordinary workers, there is need of a handful of heroes, men who save others because they cannot save themselves. Nicely calculated prudence could not survive without some of the foolishness of the Cross. The death of a hero or a martyr is a higher achievement than mere continuance of physical life.

"Lord, if it be Thou," cried impetuous Peter, "bid me come to Thee upon the waters." And Christ said "Come" to foolish Peter, while the prudent apostles remained in the boat. Surely, as Fr. Doyle on that August morning looked out upon those

undulating Flemish fields where shell-barrage and bullet-blasts laid low the advancing waves of brave men, surely he heard the Master's voice bidding him come to Him upon the waters. And he came; with his great-hearted faith he never doubted. "I am not foolhardy nor do I expose myself to danger unnecessarily, the coward is too strong in me for that; but when duty calls I know I can count on the help of One who has never failed me yet." How could he resist? Out yonder, in Verlorenhoek and Frezenberg and along the Hannebeke stream, the smashed and bleeding bodies of his poor fellows were lying. . . . "My poor brave boys! They are lying now out on the battle-field: some in a little grave dug and blessed by their chaplain who loves them all as if they were his own children; others stiff and stark with staring eyes, hidden in a shell-hole where they had crept to die; while perhaps in some far-off thatched cabin an anxious mother sits listening for the well-known step and voice which will never gladden her ear again." Having loved his "poor brave boys" in this world and eased their passage to the next, he loved them to the end. He did not desert them in their day of defeat without dishonour. And so, somewhere near the Cross Roads of Frezenberg, where he lies buried with them, the chaplain and men of the 48th Brigade are waiting together for the great Reveille.

APPENDIX I.

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Two translations of the present biography, German and Italian,[1] have been published.

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[1] The misleading and inaccurate title "A Hidden Hero for God *and Country*" was inserted in spite of my strong disapproval.

APPENDIX II.

ALLEGED FAVOURS AND CURES[1]

NUMEROUS favours and cures have been attributed to the intercession of Fr. Doyle and to the use of his relics. The following are a few among many that have been reported:

(1) A priest was dying of consumption in an hospital of San Francisco, both lungs, according to the doctors, being hopelessly diseased. A relic of Fr. Doyle was placed on the affected part and a novena for his recovery begun. The patient was so weak that he could only thank by a look. On the third day of the novena, however, there was a marked improvement in his condition. Before the novena ended he was able to get up and shortly afterwards to say Mass. A couple of weeks later he left the hospital and took up work in his parish again.

(2) A Protestant lady, the wife of an English colonel, fell sick. Her case was pronounced hopeless by the doctors. Her sister-in-law, a convert, who had read the Life of Fr. Doyle and had been much impressed by it, procured one of his relics. This was kept in the sick-room and prayers were offered for a cure through the intercession of Fr. Doyle. Almost at once a change for the better took place, and in a short time the sick lady completely recovered.

(3) The Superioress of a convent in South Africa writes under date July 12th, 1922: "One of our Community had for some time been seriously ill in a sanatorium. One evening I got a telephone message to say Sister was on the point of death and that the doctor declared there was no hope unless a change took place at once. I called the Community together and we knelt down and asked Fr. Doyle to send a change for the better by seven o'clock. It was then 6.30 p.m. Next day I went up to the sanatorium. The infirmarian came out to meet me and her first words were: 'Sister is out of danger. The change came in time.' I asked at what hour. 'Seven

[1] Communicated by Rev. Charles Doyle S.J.

o'clock last evening,' was the reply. I had promised Fr. Willie to have Masses said if he got our request granted, and that day I arranged for a number to be said in thanksgiving."

(4) A little girl of twelve had been suffering very much from her eyes for several months. Treatment by the doctor seemed only to increase the malady, and finally scales formed over the eyes making the child almost blind. A neighbour who had heard much about Fr. Doyle and had been given one of his relics by the nuns of the convent of the town, asked the mother of the child to make a novena to Fr. Doyle for the cure of the little one, offering to lend her relic to be applied to the sore eyes each day. The novena was begun that evening. On the fourth day as the child awoke in the morning she cried out that her eyes were "grand." On examining them the mother found to her surprise that the scales had disappeared completely and the eyes were quite clear and well again.

(5) A nun in a convent in Krugersdorp, Transvaal, was shortly after her profession attacked by rheumatism which completely crippled her. A novena to Fr. Doyle was begun in the novitiate for her cure, and before its conclusion she was able to go about and do her work again.

This nun attributes her religious vocation to Fr. Doyle. In December 1922 she wrote: "A little over a year ago I came on a visit to the convent in Krugersdorp. I had visited several convents in the country, but this one looked the most lonely and unhomely convent I had ever seen. Entering religion was at the time the last thought in my mind. As the bad weather made it impossible to be out of doors, one of the Sisters gave me a book to read. It was the Life of Fr. William Doyle S.J. I began to read and was hardly halfway through the book when my vocation stood out clear before me. I must enter religion, and in this 'unhomely' convent! I went to the Superioress and begged to be admitted. After the usual preliminaries my request was granted and I entered on December 2nd, 1921. I received the Holy Habit the following June and am now a six months old, very happy novice. I am absolutely certain I owe my present happiness to Fr. Doyle."

(6) An Irish Jesuit Father owing to illness had been unable to say Mass for many months. This grieved him very much, and he expressed his regret when writing to a relation, a nun in South

America, telling her of his ill-health. Some weeks later, on 9th December, he experienced a sudden change for the better. Next day he felt even stronger, and for several days the improvement continued. He informed his Rector of what was happening and expressed the belief that he would soon be able to say Mass again. The Rector questioned him and, having satisfied himself that there was a great improvement in the invalid, said that he might say Mass on December 17th if he felt strong enough. December 17th came and Mass was said without difficulty. After his thanksgiving the Father went to his room where he found a letter waiting him from his relative in South America. After expressing regret at his illness and inability to say Mass the writer said she had obtained permission from her Superior for the whole Community to begin on December 9th a novena to Fr. William Doyle, to whom they all had great devotion, that he might be able to say Mass on the day the novena ended, which would be December 17th.

(7) An old man of eighty, who had emigrated from Kerry and come to San Francisco where he had made a large fortune, had not been to the Sacraments for over forty years. All efforts to induce him to practise his religion had failed, and the last priest who had visited him had been turned away with insults and told there was no God and that no satisfactory proof that there was could be given. A Carmelite convent in the neighbourhood which heard of this began a novena to Fr. Doyle for the conversion of this poor sinner. Before the novena was ended the man sent for a priest and made his peace with God. He then began the Nine First Fridays for the grace of a happy death which took place soon after he had completed them.

(8) A Dublin mother writes: "While at the sea-side one of my little girls complained of a very sore throat one day. I examined it and found a white patch. I suspected diphtheria or at the very least an acute attack of tonsilitis. I put her to bed and applied a relic of Fr. Doyle and while waiting for the doctor, who lived at a considerable distance, I knelt down by the bedside and prayed to Fr. Willie. The poor child seemed to get worse and I could do nothing but pray. After some time she fell asleep, but in about an hour awoke and, jumping up, said in her baby way, 'Mother, my throat is gone!' And truly when I examined her throat the patch had disappeared. I have had so much experience in children's ailments and nursed one or other of them through diphtheria, tonsilitis, etc., that

I am not easily mistaken. That is why I realised that my little girl was in for something serious and that it was Fr. Doyle's prayers that arrested it."

(9) Extract from a letter written by an Australian nun to Rev. C. Doyle S. J.:

"At the end of the year 1921 our Mother J. in our Adelaide house was very ill with a huge swelling on the neck, the trouble being connected with some ear complaint. She was very much run down at the time; her weakness was so great that the doctor expected the worst. The swelling, it was feared, would attack the brain, and if she ever recovered she would be mentally impaired. She did not know her danger herself, but had been invoking Fr. W. Doyle, whose life she had been reading, to bring about her cure. The sister who was taking care of her had one of the relics you sent out to X. some years ago. She put it on her, and from that moment she began to improve until she was completely cured. At the present moment she is quite well."

(10) Continuation of the same letter

"Another sister in the Adelaide community was cured about the same time of a diseased tongue. The tongue was one huge sore, and the cause could not be ascertained. One day the Superior called in an old nun, who had recently joined the community, to look at the tongue. She produced a relic of Fr. W. Doyle, got her to put it on; from that moment she got better, and is now quite well."

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